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Leverage — Lloyd Kohler
[illegible] — George Gilbert

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From Nine Dollars a Week To Part Owner of a Business

The life-story of a man who wouldn't stay down. How Purwin got out of the rut and made good in a big way.

By Robert G. Hill

TO every man who says that he "never had a chance" or that "Fate is against him," I want to relate the story of Klemens Purwin—"the man who wouldn't stay down."

Nine years ago his time card read K. Purwin—laborer—$1.50 a day.

Today his business card reads—Klemens Purwin, Consulting Engineer, The Stoney Foundry Engineering and Equipment Co., East 66th and Hubbard Ave., Cleveland.

MR. PURWIN'S first job was as a laborer with the American Steel and Wire Company. His second was in a tinner's shop in Chicago. His third was as a pipe fitter with the Illinois Central Railroad. His fourth with the P. R. R.

KLEMENS PURWIN

Mr. Purwin—or K. Purwin, as he was known in those days—was drifting. He was $800 in debt when he got his next job—this time with the Erie Railroad at Cleveland.

He told me the other day that when he got his first pay envelope from this company he sat down in the corner of the shop and did a heap of thinking.

"Am I always going to work for such a small salary?" he asked himself. "Other men are getting ahead—why not I?"

The more he thought about it, the more he realized that the difference was simply this:—they had trained themselves to do some one thing better than anyone else. And he—K. Purwin—was just one of the thousands of unskilled workers who are always the first to go when business slacks up.

THAT night, K. Purwin made the decision that was to change his whole life. Reading through a magazine he came across an advertisement of the International Correspondence Schools at Scranton. It told how the Schools had helped thousands of men to increase their salary and to make themselves indispensable in business. How the Schools come to a man in his home, and how they train him in the spare time that is ordinarily wasted! How any man—no matter what his means or previous education, can go forward through the help of I. C. S.

That night K. Purwin tore out that familiar coupon, marked it and sent it to Scranton.

Every lesson helped him with his work and in three months he secured a job as a machinist with the Ferro Machine and Foundry Company of Cleveland. After a few months he was made assistant foreman—then foreman. Then one day he said good-bye to his overalls and went into the drafting room.

Advancement followed advancement. And today, as I have already said, K. Purwin, who was once a laborer at nine dollars a week, is not only Consulting [illegible] The [illegible] and [illegible] owner [illegible]

IT [illegible] Such [illegible] sitting [illegible] but [illegible] in the spare time that now goes to waste.

No matter where you live, the I. C. S. will come to *you*. No matter what your handicaps or how small your means, we have a plan to meet your circumstances. No matter how limited your previous education, the simply-written, wonderfully-illustrated I. C. S. textbooks make it easy to learn.

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- ☐ Machine Shop Practice
- ☐ Toolmaker
- ☐ Gas Engine Operating
- ☐ CIVIL ENGINEER
- ☐ Surveying and Mapping
- ☐ MINE FOREMAN or ENG'R
- ☐ STATIONARY ENGINEER
- ☐ Marine Engineer
- ☐ ARCHITECT
- ☐ Contractor and Builder
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**Occasionally one of our stories will be called an "Off-the-Trail" story, a warning that it is in some way different from the usual magazine stories, perhaps a little different, perhaps a good deal. It may violate a canon of literature or a custom of magazines, or merely be different from the type usually found in this magazine. The difference may lie in unusual theme, material, ending, or manner of telling. No question of relative merit is involved.*

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THE DANK, murderous jungle of the upper Amazon. By the waters of a dark lagoon a naked, poisonous tree, about whose roots serpents swarm. Here enemies of the Snake are crucified. To this spot come two cheery jungle runners and a furious Yankee determined on revenge. "THE JARARACA," a novelette by Arthur O. Friel, complete in the next issue.

EVERHARD, accused of an appalling crime, plunges into the underworld of Los Angeles, and follows a trail marked by violence and death—with the relentless law at his heels. "DEAD OR ALIVE," a novelette by Gordon Young, complete in the next issue.

Other stories in the next issue are forecast on the last page of this one.

Don't forget the new dates of issue for *Adventure*—the 10th, 20th and 30th of each month

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Dec. 20
1921
Vol. XXXII
No. 2

Barehanded Castaways

A COMPLETE NOVEL

By J. Allan Dunn

Author of "The Exterminator," "The Gold Ship," etc.

EDITOR'S NOTE—**The story of this story will be found in "Camp-Fire" of this issue, telling how this unique "desert island" novel came to be written and explaining why it differs so radically from the usual story of this kind.**

CHAPTER I

THE NINE SLEEPERS

DRETT was the first of the nine to awaken—or to recover consciousness. It was hard to determine his exact condition.

He felt the touch of the wind on his unshaven cheek, the grit of the beach beneath his hand. He heard the swash of the shore surf and the deeper boom of breakers on the barrier reef. He saw the sky, the color of pale amber with streaks of cirrus clouds, high up, stained purple in the sunrise—it might be the sunset. Yet these sensations barely registered. They roused in him, for the moment, no emotion. He seemed still in the thrall of the nightmare he had ridden through the horrors of the past few days that now were ending peacefully.

There had been times when he, with the rest, had acted only with the blind and desperate instinct of men in the last extremity, toys of the elements, their vitality broken down, their best efforts so helpless, the succession of incident and accident so swift that, whatever of it might have been

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impressed upon his subconscious memory, he could not now translate it into terms of remembrance.

He lay there weak of body and lax of will, without coordination, content to gaze at the amber skybowl, tinging slowly to apple-green, the wisps of vapor changing to a glory of crimson and orange as they sailed into the direct beams of the unseen sun. If his brain held a definite idea it was fear that behind that closed door of memory lurked terror, not only of the past but the imminent present, that the nightmare would bear him off to fresh horrors. And he could stand no more.

Little by little the tide of life within him turned from ebb to flow and, with renewed vitality, came pain. He began to ache from crown to sole. Hunger gnawed in his belly; thirst parched his throat; his body called peremptorily to his brain for relief. Above all he sensed his weakness. All the fibers of his being seemed to have slackened.

The plaintive mew of a gull came sharply to his ears. He saw the beady, speculative eye of the bird turned upon him as it floated past the entrance to the shallow grotto where the nine of them had sought shelter, floored by the shingle that now began to assert its unease on his protesting back, roofed by the ledge of hard rock under which the waves had scooped out the inadequate cover.

His first attempt at movement brought nausea and dizziness. From kneeling upright he dropped to his palms until the vertigo left him, then rose and staggered a little way down the beach. The shifting pebbles bruised his naked feet and he sat down, his head ringing again, his long arms wrapped about his knees, looking half vacantly about him.

Here was a bay, a quarter-circle of water and beach, sheer black cliff that ran out into deep water on either side, perhaps half a mile between the headlands. A line of surf. Beyond, blue sea, like crinkled silk, stretching away until it blended with the horizon haze.

The sky was blue now, the cirrus clouds twists of pearly tissue. Back of the cliff the sun was shining up a new day. Purple shadow held the bay, slowly retreating shoreward. There was no sound but the rhythmic beat of the surf—the pulse of the sea—and the occasional cry of a gull, planing past, inquisitive, querulous.

The ocean stretched bright and shining, but Brett regarded it grimly. To him it looked like a monster purring in sleep with heaving sides after a wild debauch of wilful cruelty and murder, licking its treacherous lips, mocking in its quietude that stored up fresh outbreak.

He was in what had once been striped pajamas of fair linen. They were still whole, though worn, but they were stained and wrinkled and all the buttons, save one, were off the jacket. Next to his skin was buckled a chamois leather money belt. In its pockets eleven hundred dollars were tucked away, three hundred in gold eagles, the rest in sodden paper money.

Brett was tall and lean and weather burned. He had a shock of brown hair that stood up like a crest and gray eyes now sunk in deep pits that told of long continued stress. They held a light that was beginning to shine more steadily as he attained command of himself, his will, despite physical faintness, facing resolutely the phantasmagoria of despair that rose before him.

He shook in half shiver, half shudder, wrought from without and within. He felt damp and chilly in the shade. In his brain images were forming, shadowy, vague as a moving-picture film projected out of focus, reeling off the story of an ocean tragedy.

IT BEGAN with the hurricane that had swept down upon them the fourth day out from San Francisco. The ocean running like rapids in a welter of white water, beaten flat, writhing under the lash, striving to avenge itself upon the ship. A lowered, sooty sky, moving on like an overhead river. Between clouds and sea, the howling and the roaring of the wind. Spindrift, driving level, thick as blizzard snow.

A phrase jumped up in his mind—like a subtitle—a phrase spoken by some one in authority—*blowing a hundred miles an hour!*— But the steamer had fought it out, not without honorable scars. Some rivets had sheared, there had been too much perpetual stress of churning screws, now levering against the mad water, now spinning wildly in air. A shaft was damaged, a propeller put out of commission, something went wrong with the steering gear.

Thus handicapped they had been swept

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far out of their course. How far, the passengers had not been told. Brett fancied there had been no chance for observations but he knew little of navigation problems.

Repairs had been made at last and, with the weather still bad but tempering, a new course was set. There had been resolutions passed, he remembered, speeches of thanks to the captain, a subscription taken up for a presentation. Nothing for the engineer in charge.

Then, in the middle of the night, all sleeping with confidence restored, there had come the sudden shock, the canting of the vessel like a stricken beast, uprearing in agony, the grinding of torn plates along the uncharted reef! Pandemonium, the lights out! Cries and orders! The horrible, lurching slip of the steamer, the quivering stop, hung on the verge of a submarine abyss! The rush for the deck, a feeble sputter from the wireless, passengers buffeting and clawing their frantic way to the boats! Officers striving for command of the situation, the mutinous upheaval of the crew of the engine-room! Another fearful slip of the steamer! Women marshaled overside in their nightwear, hysterical, fainting.

A crowd of them—no women, thank God! —huddled in one boat as it swung slanting between the falls, sailors at the ropes in bow and stern! The slosh of the sea against the dim bulk of the partly submerged ship. Slow descent, and then——

A sickening swoop through space, the boat hanging from its stem by one snarled fall. Men tumbling with inarticulate shrieks that were swiftly silenced in the turmoil, falling into the sea like pebbles tossed out of a can! Brett, with a few others lucky enough to get fingerhold, clinging frantically to the thwarts! An upleaping wave that half lifted, half swamped them. A yell, the snarl unkinked—or cut—a confusion of the scrambling mass of men in the bottom of the boat, a furious tossing and the thrust of an oar into his hands from the stubby under-steward, Walker, taking charge in the emergency.

"Now then, shove out an oar, sir, an' 'elp pull 'er free. Git movin', you blighters —pull, blarst yer, *pull!*"

The boat moving clumsily away into the night, sloppy with water to their calves, cars out of place and time, moving like a wounded water-beetle. The flare of a portfire, the glimpse of another boat, blue and ghostly in the gleam, and, through all the mad struggle for safety, the little cockney's voice from the stern, vibrant, imperative.

"She's goin'! Look out for the suck. Pull, blarst yer, pull!"

Water that tugged at them as they strove incompetently at the oars, fighting on the verge of the great eddy that funneled to where the ship had gone down. Faint sounds of shouts across the water. Darkness! The heave of the sea and the hiss of it. The cold slaps of the gusty wind!

It was Walker, with his second-hand knowledge of boat-handling, yet greater than any of theirs, who had saved them from that first blow of Fate, leaping into the breach with the old authority he had learned in the trenches as corporal.

Later, it was Brett who had taken hold, distributing the food that had been retained in the boat's lockers during the upset, putting what cheer he could into the empty days, leavening their hopelessness.

They had four oars that had been lashed during the hurried launching, they had mast and sails. Few clothes. No compass, not even a watch between them; no better sailor aboard than the under-steward, knowing east from west only by the murky sunset or a streak from the struggling sunrise. Clouds by day and night, clouds and rain and squally weather. No stars.

When the wind blew they hoisted sail and went before it, west and south. They belayed the sheet to a cleat and a gust split the canvas, snapped the rope, carried off the sail. Then they rowed at haphazard, keeping the boat's head to the seas, struggling blindly and painfully nowhere. The food down to demi-rations, scarce and sodden at that.

Haggard, despairing, helpless, driven out of a downpour of rain that ended as abruptly as a wall, the wind pursuing them. Thunder of surf ahead, the loom of land against the stars, enormous billows racing shorewards! The boat bound to a monster wave, like Mazeppa to the wild stallion. A pounding scrape, the craft filling with water, breaking up as they were borne by the shore racing breaker, grounding at last in the shallows.

A scramble through sliddery shingle and undertow—Brett helping some one whom he fancied was the professor—a last

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tottering effort up the slope, and collapse within the shallow cavern—the end of strength, of all resistance—oblivion!

That was the past—a dream. The present faced him—stern reality.

CHAPTER II

A THOUSAND MILES FROM NOWHERE

A PIECE of wood, part of the broken planking of the boat, bobbed in the shore wash and slapped on the shingle. Brett watched it idly. Finally it was left stranded. The oars, all the rest of the boat, had been back-drawn through the reef gate by the ebb tide and was now drifting down the coast in the grip of a current that would carry the flotsam far out to sea.

The surrender of its plaything by the water was token that the tide was on the turn, as the stretch of shingle also showed, but Brett knew nothing of such signs, nothing of the ways of the water that he had not noticed from the deck of a steamer or as passenger in the cockpit of a launch or yacht. And not much of that.

To him the bit of wreckage was merely a symbol of the greater catastrophe. The ocean had tired of its toy and flung it ashore as it had indifferently cast the nine of them.

The barren, desolate nature of the place, as its image had been registered upon the sensitive plate of Brett's mentality, began to bite in, like an etching. He roused himself with an effort, his head ringing, and got to his feet. The cliff, backed by the glory of the sunrise, appeared all the more forbidding.

It was surely several hundred feet high—to him it seemed as high as the Woolworth Building, and as unscalable. It rose grim from the chafing waves; it showed no terraces, no clefts up which one might clamber even a very little way. There was no sign of vegetation. Not even seaweed on the monotonous mosaic of the curving beach, unmarked by rock or boulder.

Brett was thirsty, but there had been rainwater enough and to spare in the boat; he could get along without water for a few hours. But he had fasted for two days and he was faint and weak. Vaguely he thought of mussels. Shellfish were edible. But—he gazed around helplessly—where to find them?

Perhaps the tide would go out and there would be rocks with limpets clinging to them. The reminder came that he did not know what varieties were safe to eat. Many, he believed, were poisonous. Shellfish were a good deal like mushrooms and toadstools in that respect. An expert could gather a hundred varieties and enjoy them, the ignorant must leave them alone in fear.

What lay over the top of the cliff, beyond the capes? Jungle? Savages? Or ash heaps and burned-out cones? The cliff looked volcanic. Were they in the tropic or the temperate zone? Above or below the line?

Brett tried to make a calculation. It was five days trip to Honolulu. They had made four-fifths of the trip when the hurricane swooped down. Between sixteen and seventeen hundred miles southwest from San Francisco.

There his knowledge began and ended. He had not bothered to find out their position the day they had started up again, after the repairs had been made. If, indeed, it had been posted where the passengers could see it. Vaguely, he fancied the gale had come from the north-east, or north-west. It would have blown them south.

They had been ten days in the boat, making progress of some sort night and day. Call it four miles an hour, four short of a hundred a day. That meant nearly a thousand miles—call it a thousand miles—from an unknown spot where the reefs were uncharted. *A thousand miles from nowhere!*

"My God!" The groan was half exclamation, half prayer. Brett was not accustomed to look upon himself as a religious man. He had prayed, when last he could not remember. Neither was he atheist or agnostic. The two words were the instinctive recognition of the almost naked will that it was face to face with the primitive, the infinite, flung purely on self-resource and rapidly realizing its stupendous ignorance and weakness. Whatever there was of egoism in the makeup of John Brett peeled from him as he looked at the placid, glittering sea, the shingled shore and the black, scowling cliff, sloughed from him as a snake sheds its skin in the Spring.

He walked painfully up the hump of the beach, where the sliding stones seemed resentfully to turn and bruise him, and looked at his comrades in misfortune.

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Professor Harland lay upon his back, his veined hands on his lean stomach, one leg drawn up. The wind fluttered the scanty white hair on the fine dome of his head, his own breath lifted his untrimmed mustache with little puffings of his sunken cheeks as he breathed. White stubble gleamed like silver on his jaws. He looked very old and frail, the face already suggesting the skull, the thin wrists and legs prophesying the ultimate skeleton.

A gentle, kindly, learned man, the professor, bound on a holiday trip to a married daughter on a plantation near Hilo, wrapped up in his next edition of The Æneid, rendered into hexameters; courteous and human, an expert at chess and bridge. He had been Brett's cabin-mate and Brett, with the whole passenger list, had formed an admiration for him that would readily have extended into friendship. The pity of this amiable gentleman's plight struck deeply into Brett's sympathy.

Next, Walker sprawled, face down on the shingle, his face on one arm. The plucky, quick-witted steward had fared better than most of them. Hardship he had been familiar with in the bloody, muddy trenches. His five-feet-four of manhood was good, tested fiber.

His face, the forehead wrinkling constantly, the blue eyes in their sandy-lashed rims always eager for what was going forward, had seldom been without a smile that showed the wide-spaced teeth. A good sort, Walker, with his snatches of marching songs and his everlasting question in the face of discomfort and danger—"Are we downhearted?"

Then Tully, clerk in the Civil Service, en route to Manila, twenty-five or so, a clean, ingenuous chap without much to show as yet in the way of development. A good deal of an infant, Brett mentally docketed Tully.

Bowman, asleep beside him, was a different type, slightly older. Cable operator, quick, slim, keen for his enjoyments, bewailing prohibition, dancing, flirting, inclined to play cards with richer and wiser men, hasty-tempered, self-indulgent, flying to heights of irresponsible good humor and friendliness or sliding swiftly to sullen depths of despair, railing at fate.

Of these four, the steward alone was shod and comparatively well clad in singlet, soft shirt, socks and trousers. Defter at hasty dressing than the rest, or having turned in ready for a call, Walker was wearing the only shoes in the party, a pair of canvas sneakers. The professor had on his old-fashioned nightgown tucked into a pair of striped trousers of fine weave, once immaculate. Tully and Bowman, like Brett, were in their pajamas.

The two next were of different mold, firemen, both of them. Oilers, rather, since the steamer had used that fuel. One was named Malone, a reckless wanderer of the Seven Seas, big boned, big framed, ravaged by intemperance along a hundred waterfronts, far from a fool, yet ignorant. The second oiler answered to the name of "Wolf."

Malone referred to him as "The Slovak." His brutish, dull face was furred with black growth of beard; his great, scooplike hands lay at the end of his long hairy arms with the horned palms up. His wide-ribbed chest labored, and he snored prodigiously. He seemed more animal than man. He had slumped under disaster, grown mutinous when the rations were shortened, relapsed into apathy for the last few days.

Brett had always been thankful he had not come away with a knife concealed about him. Like Malone, he wore a dirty undervest of cheap woolen weave and a pair of stained dunagrees. Curiously, both of them had kicked off the shoes they had been wearing in the engine-room, perhaps with some dim idea of greater freedom in the water, though neither could swim a stroke.

The seventh man was a giant. He wore striped pajamas of green and white with an edging of brilliant green silk. The open jacket, the trousers tucked up to the knee, helped to reveal his magnificent body. He was on the passenger list as "Wallaby Brown." One glance at his face with its broken nose and cauliflower ear revealed his calling of pugilist.

He was returning from a not altogether successful attack upon the championships of the United States, where his brawn and gameness had been often outmatched by superior skill, though he had been a universally respected opponent. His main diversion was skylarking; he had little eyes that glinted with humor; he had been the delight of all the children aboard and his infectious laugh was unfailing.

"Well, 'ere we go," had been his contribution as the boat was swept for the reef.

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A laugh had backed that. That laugh was not always premeditated. It effervesced in the Australian fighter like bubbles in gaseous spring water, but it had helped a lot, as his strength had often aided in critical moments. Brett was glad Wallaby Brown was along.

The last of the party was the handsomest, physically, though Brown could have broken his symmetry as a man breaks a dry stick. Even now, cheeks, chin and neck dark blue with the unshaven beard, his long black hair matted with salt-water and grit, his pajamas of actual silk—a deep purple monogrammed in crimson—the chap looked like Don Juan cast ashore. Tyrone O'Neill, he styled himself. Brett doubted his purely Irish ancestry, had been inclined to belittle his poses, his love and expectation of admiration.

O'Neill was a film star, part of a company sailing to camera the scenes of a South Sea romance upon a location that should be indisputably genuine. Brett wondered where the rest of that life-loving crowd, so curiously remote in a world of make-believe of their own, were scattered. And O'Neill, with his inordinate sense of the dramatic—and of himself as the inevitable leading man—how would he take his unchosen rôle in their abrupt adventure?

Sometimes he had shown signs of a different man beneath the shell. During the trip of the boat he had gloomed alone, tragic, finding, Brett suspected, certain compensations in his very discomfort. He wondered from what original walk of life O'Neill had been snatched by some smart impresario seeing in him the type to attract the girls and women who frequent the film theaters. O'Neill, spoiled, valeted, worshipped, selfish and despotic! It was going to be a bit of a shock to O'Neill when he took in their surroundings, Brett imagined, with the ghost of a smile quirking his sensitive mouth.

Brett had a sense of humor and he cultivated it. It was going to be a very valuable and necessary asset in the present situation, he figured. Unless some Golden Land of Plenty lay beyond the cliff, the nine of them were going to need all of their best qualities of courage, endurance and knowledge to carry them through—to enable them to exist.

The eight were asleep and Brett had not the heart to awaken them. While they slumbered they knew nothing of thirst or hunger or the exactions of their condition. They could do nothing to help. There was nothing that could be done except a careful examination of the cliff. If the tide fell sufficiently there might be an excursion about the capes. That should be done with caution, if possible in force.

The last word brought its own mockery as it formulated itself in thought. Aside from what strength could be expressed through their own limbs, they were helpless. Against weapons, against beasts with rending claws and teeth, they were pitifully powerless. There might well be wild animals or wild men on the island. Brett was quite convinced this was not the mainland and yet—even as he advanced to himself that assurance, it was shaken. He knew little more about it than the piece of broken plank on the shingle.

HE STARTED to walk gingerly along the beach, keeping close to the cliff because there he found the shingle regularly finer, even an occasional patch of sand, for which his feet were grateful. As he went he carefully surveyed the precipice for opportunities of scaling it.

The shadow had appreciably retreated from the sea. The two horns of their quarter-circle of imprisonment now shone in slanting sunlight that came from Brett's right as he looked seaward, a line of brightness that extended diagonally across the bay. He calculated that the beach faced generally the northwest though he was dubious whether the sun had risen directly in the east, or how long it had been above the sea horizon before it topped the cliff. In such matters he was lamentably deficient, he told himself.

Brett was by profession an editor. He was on his way to take charge of a new mid-Pacific publication that promised unusual opportunities in the light of recent interest in South Sea affairs. At heart he had ever been an adventurer. When he had first read Kipling:

> "Something Hidden. Go and find it.
> Go and look behind the Ranges—
> Something lost behind the Ranges,
> Lost and waiting for you. Go!"

—his blood had tingled as his heart pumped harder to the impulse of an emotion roused by the words that expressed the thoughts

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he had not yet crystallized, though they had often stirred the subtle chemistry of his being.

But, after school and hard-earned college, the haunting specter of Necessity, ever beside him, had stepped up and tapped him on the spiritual shoulder with the admonition that he accept the first opening. He had thought himself fortunate to find a job in accord with his taste for literature. He had tried his hand at original writing but there were others, in the beginning, who were dependent upon him. For himself he might have grinned at meager food and indifferent lodging while he wooed Success, but a dutiful son may not be a Bohemian. There were various preliminary positions, glossed with the prefixes of *sub-*, *associate-*, *assistant-*, there were certain triumphs of achievement and acknowledgment; but his success in literature was largely vicarious.

It consisted in the reading of other men's manuscripts; the judgment of them as saleable. These chaps went up and down the earth for their material and experience. Brett sorted their product for the stay-at-home reader who, with Brett, had their hours of go-fever when the mental temperature rises and ordinary tasks seem dull.

One thing amazed him now, that, out of the mass of the stuff he had edited, the tales of such castaways as he was, of adventure in the face of odds by sea and land, he had digested so little of the knowledge the various heroes had shown under predicament. Some of them had been specialized, of course—there lay the trouble. The world in general was too highly specialized. The average citizen was super-civilized, dependent on the other man's specialty, content to go to the encyclopedia.

"It's a darned shame we couldn't have brought a set of the Britannica ashore with us." He said that half aloud and laughed as he said it, reviewing his own actual knowledge of things to help them in their present strait. That didn't take long.

He knew a little very elementary woodcraft, had a slight knowledge of edible mushrooms, of ordinary carpenters' tools, of the principles of gear and lever, of bicycle machinery. He knew something of practical gardening, the groundwork of horticulture, grafting and cross-breeding. He had a small knowledge of soils and their handling. Of fishing, including drag and dip nets and the general theory of set nets and fish traps.

He understood the common principles of sailing—could handle canoes and skiffs. He fancied he could swiftly recognize coal, peat, oil indications, probably iron and copper from an unprofessional view-point. He could cook ordinary things well enough, except to make bread, cake, pastry. And he knew the North Star.

With the exception of the professor, he was the best educated man of the party. He had taken the leadership, quite naturally, with full approval of the others. That meant initiative. He was in fair physical condition. His wind was good and he could outswim ninety men out of a hundred, not counting those who could not swim at all.

But how could he apply that little—that very little—list of accomplishments? His New England ancestors, striving in the wilderness, would have put him to shame. Of course the compulsion of wrestling with and overcoming immediate problems had taught them their practical knowledge of living. Nevertheless John Brett, product of the twentieth century, should have been competent to survey present circumstances with more hopefulness than he could summon.

Without tools, without hook or line or thread, without matches, even if they attained meat, found materials, how were they to provide the three essentials of existence — fire — food — water? And, beyond these three, lodging, clothing?

They would have to pool their common knowledge and apply the sum. Never were castaways more forlorn, less furnished. In all the fiction Brett had read, in the wide majority of true stories of Crusoeing, there had been something saved. Sometimes a wreck with much of value, as with the original Robinson. At the least a match or two or a watch crystal to act as burning glass. A knife. Some twine. And they had nothing.

It was beginning to get warm. If they were in the tropics, clothing might not present such a problem. But it increased his thirst. And, crowding that to insignificance, creating a distress that was almost overwhelming, the desire for tobacco wracked him. That was not to last forever but—Brett's fingers still bore the stain of many cigarets—too many, without doubt. It had been ten days since he had seen one, and the desire gripped him fiendishly. At

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the moment he would have swapped a year of life for a sack of Durham and a book of brown papers.

He leaned against the cliff and looked dully out to sea. Where the sun hit the water inside the barrier reef it gave it the hue of green jade. Outside the foam-piled coral the sea was a prismatic peacock blue, brazen in the tiny hollows of the swells.

[illegible]tt's heart gave a leap and be-
[illegible]d.
[illegible]en a man's head! Black hair
[illegible]ed up into a sudden dazzle of
[illegible] its wetness and then disap-
[illegible]t a man—swimming—diving,
[illegible]ner had, perhaps, noted observ-
[illegible] did it mean?
[illegible] of fright was fear. Crusoe dis-
[illegible]e footprint was not more
[illegible]ere was a savage, spying from
[illegible]fore the tribe came swooping
[illegible]oe in a canoe, yelling, brandish-
[illegible] spears!
[illegible]ll took command; his reason
[illegible] imagination. To the impulse
[illegible]pposed the determination to
[illegible]elf and his comrades. Stones
[illegible]nly available weapons. He
[illegible]shout of warning on his lips as
[illegible]ke water again, slick, shining
[illegible] silver in the high-lights, a head retreating of forehead, large and bright of eye—a—a seal, ranging for breakfast!

There was flesh and clothing and even fuel. But how to obtain it? How to outtrick a seal in its own element without boat, without harpoon or gun? The sleek sea beast made a mock of him. It dived; it came up with a shimmering fish in its mouth.

But it had made him forget the missing cigaret. He turned again to his patrol of the cliff. Once, he fancied, it had been upthrust from the sea, hissing and smoking, the water seething at its foot. Subsidence, or later upheaval, had provided the resting place for the beach. But, between him and the summit, there was no avenue of passage. Not even a goat could find a trail. He doubted whether there were ledges wide enough for nesting seabirds. He saw no evidence.

In the yarns he had printed in the magazines that he had edited there had always been some handy substance for the immediate preservation of life, in castaways. A coco-palm, eggs of bird or turtle, even a stranded fish, or one caught in a rock pool.

The only gull he had seen still planed back and forth, suspicious of the strangers; no turtle would lay eggs on such a stony beach. As for palms——!

Surely this was the abomination of desolation. They had been rescued only for further torture. The gods were laughing. A thousand miles from nowhere—and from nothing.

The situation was invincible. Brett frowned at the word. He did not like it. Nothing was invincible except the soul of man.

There was no doubt now as to the tide going out. A rock or two began to show. There must be limpets. If he was stronger he could swim out beyond the capes. The ebb might allow him to walk around them. There must be a way in, if not a way out.

The scowling cliff gave out a sudden brightness as the sun mounted. Brett hurried to the spot hopefully. It was damp. A trickle of water ran down the trough of a shallow fluting of the formation. He touched it with his tongue. It was fresh. He lapped the rock.

He knelt and dug into the damp grit, digging with his fingers until he had scooped out a tiny basin where he watched the precious water that trailed down from some providential seam, slowly, slowly collecting. He had touched rock with his finger tips. It would not escape him altogether. It came with painful sloth. It would take an hour to get a gill of it. Six pints in twenty-four hours for nine of them! And he could not hog it. The professor was close to his limits of vitality.

Brett lay down and lapped up a little of the fluid. He filled his mouth with grit, slightly brackish yet infinitely delicious. Then he went back toward the sleepers.

CHAPTER III

FIRE—FOOD—WATER

BRETT awakened the professor first of all and led him to the tiny water source. The scholar walked with a limping gait and the chin he tried to hold steady trembled. It was with difficulty he hoarsely managed to make himself heard through his parched and peeling lips.

"You have drunk?"

"Had plenty."

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"And the rest?"

"There will be enough for all. About two ounces every thirty minutes. They will have to take their turns. Draw lots for it. They are asleep now."

Professor Harland seemed to have some slight scruples remaining but he knelt and sucked up the little puddle in the grit which slowly began to fill again.

"Lot of it is lost through the sides," said Brett, "but it's better than nothing. We may find some other place where the cliff leaks." Harland looked about them, pursing up his mouth.

"We'll have to do some exploring," said Brett. "Not much of a prospect in this bay. But we can get around those heads and see what we can find. No use guessing what there may or may not be. I've been figuring on shellfish from those rocks that are being uncovered. Limpets or mussels. We'll have to eat them raw. No matches."

"Umph! No fuel. That would be the main difficulty, I fancy."

Brett looked at him inquiringly.

"Figuring on a watch-glass? None in the crowd."

"No. I should imagine—of course I know very little of such matters from a practical standpoint—I should imagine the modern type of watch crystal would not be adaptable as a burning glass." He spoke with diffidence. "I was thinking of a passage in Vergil's Æneid, in the first book. You studied the Latin classics? Perhaps you remember?"

Brett shook his head, humoring the elder man.

"It is where the fleet of Æneas landed on the Libyan sea coast and

The Trojans leap down from their galleys *

The professor's tongue tripped lovingly over his syllables. It was fairly evident that he was quoting from his own translation.

"Then Achates, the crony of Æneas, you remember *fidus* Achates, makes fire. Let me see, how does it go?

Quickly, however, Achates hath struck out a spark from a flint stone:
Now he hath caught up the fire in leaves; dry fuel around it
He hath arranged; and now he hath kindled a flame in the fagots;

* *The lines of Vergil have been, by courtesy of the author, taken from Harlan Hoge Ballard's hexameter translation. (Houghton Mifflin & Co.) H. M. Ballard, Esq. M. A., Pittsfield, Mass.*

"Undoubtedly Achates used steel, probably carried the whole fire-making contrivance complete, but he could have made shift with a spearhead and a stone from the beach. With some hunting he might have found two stones that, struck together, would have furnished sparks. I myself have often hunted along a brook and discovered such pebbles—kindred of the fire. Perhaps we have some steel among us—a buckle tongue? I imagine we can discover the flinty rock. This cliff might provide it. For tinder the scraped lint of our linen. It is fuel we chiefly lack."

Brett clapped Harland lightly on the shoulder, affectionately.

"The concrete results of a classical education, properly applied," he said. "Mine didn't take. It seems idiotic not to have thought of flint and spark stones but I have been pondering over hardwood friction and remembering how almost impossible it is for a white man to accomplish it. You've hit upon the solution. That whole cliff looks like obsidian. Good for arrowheads, too. If there is any timber on this island—if it is an island—we'll manage fire, thanks to the Brains of the Party. There's a bit of wood on the beach, a broken plank of the boat but it wouldn't last long enough to amount to much in the way of a fire. We'll salvage it though. There may be a nail or two in it we can make into fish-hooks.

"The rest of the crowd is coming back to life. You stick around here by the spring, Mr. Harland, and take it easy. We've got to take special care of you. I begin to foresee where you will be the Moses of this company."

"It was you who brought the water out of the rock," Harland smiled. "I am afraid I shall be of little practical use. You must thank Vergil," he added deprecatingly.

Brett considered the fire-making as he went toward the seven men who were now standing or sitting up, looking toward him. He had little doubt but that they could achieve it. There were the steel buckles of his money belt with its useless contents. Some steel in the dungarees of Malone and Wolf. The archaic method. Simpler than the fire-drill of the Boy Scouts, over the construction of which he had been already puzzling. He reached the crowd with a degree of brisk purpose that had its effect upon them. Their eyes were dull; their attitudes apathetic. Brett had been the leader

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so far; they looked to him for suggestion and action.

"I've found some water," he said. "Not much. Takes thirty minutes to make a little puddle. About two mouthfuls. You can empty it in turn. I've had mine while you were asleep. So has Professor Harland. Here——"

He squatted on his haunches and selected seven pebbles from the grit, six white, one black, holding them between his palms, shaking them.

"One at a time. Man who gets the black pebble drinks first. Next to get it, second, and so on. While you're waiting for your turns, you can scout down the beach, that way, in case there's another place where fresh water comes from the cliff. Some of you can get shell-fish as the tide drops. See that gull? He isn't alone. We'll likely find a colony and get eggs. Soon as we've got something in our stomachs we'll scout around those capes and find out where we're at. We're on dry land, anyway."

"I'll say it's dry," said Tully, who had drawn the seventh black pebble. "A —— of a hole, I call it!"

They did not scatter at first but gathered at the tiny waterhole. Wolf had been the luckiest in the lottery. The quantity that had collected was less than half the amount the improvised cup would hold.

"If you can wait," said Brett, "you can drink more easily and get clearer water after it fills up. It will help us to gage turns better."

The oiler looked at him with blood-shot eyes, lurching forward, his scoop-like hands extended.

"I make it bigger," he said. "That too small."

"There are others waiting, Wolf."

The Slovak stretched out one hairy, corded arm and swept Brett to one side as easily as a man might push away a child. For the first time Brett realized the oiler's strength as compared to his own. It was actually the first time that he had come into antagonistic contact with a man of Wolf's type, brawn against brawn. He had always imagined himself as being average, at least, in muscular power. He had kept up certain exercises to maintain the condition of his body. In student days he had shown strength and endurance with the best of his fellows.

But it was plain that Wolf had not exerted himself in the slightest, yet he had put him aside with no more difficulty than Brett would have set aside brushwood. Anger flamed in him. He realized his physical reaction was impotent, useless. His leadership was in peril from a man incapable of taking that position. It was a question of beasts at the waterhole. With the Slovak —might was right.

THEN Wallaby Brown stepped between the oiler and the cliff, a smile on his battered face, his speech prefaced with a laugh.

"'Old on a mo', Wolf. You're only cheating yourself. Let Brett handle it." The eyes of Wolf were as those of the brute itself. There was in them nothing of humanity, only bestial rage at this baiting of his impatient appetite. He uttered a guttural oath in his own dialect, showing his yellow teeth as he snarled and caught at the wrist of Wallaby.

The pugilist side-stepped lightly. Instead of Wolf's fingers clamping on Wallaby's arm the ten digits met in a grip that Wolf welcomed with a grin that faded instantly. Wallaby pulled the Slovak slightly toward him, swiftly thrusting his left arm back of the other's right, hand outspread on Wolf's chest, the limb rigid with tense muscles, a fulcrum against which he thrust the oiler's elbow, putting out his full strength, twisting Wolf about as the pressure became agony, threatened to break the latter's arm.

The Slovak, the pain in his eyes blent with surprize at the easy mastery of the attack, found himself facing away from the cliff and the pool. As Wallaby, still smiling, released him, Walker stood before him, cock sparrow to a crow, his eyes blazing, authority snapping from him as sparks jump from an overcharged wire.

"Back up, you blighter! There's one of you to eight of us. Put that sum on your slyte and add it up. Mr. Brett's runnin' this shebang. You—you thick-headed, bow-legged, 'airy-skinned hape, you line up where you're told and stay put."

Wolf blinked at Walker, bewildered, like a beast that has dreamed away captivity in the night and suddenly hears the crack of a trainer's whip. He glanced at Malone but the Irishman was laughing at his discomfiture. He looked at Wallaby and Brett saw a crimson gleam in his eyes. But

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he knelt, swallowed the now brimming contents of the pool and shuffled off through the shingle, wading out toward the rocks that the receding tide exposed.

Bowman was next to drink. The others, satisfied as to the procedure, proceeded to examine the confines of their landing-place. O'Neill, who had drawn the third black pebble, did not go far from the pool. Wolf was thigh-deep in the water, making his way toward a weedy boulder. Walker ranged with Brett.

"Got to keep your weather eye on that Slovak," he said confidentially. "You carnt 'andle the likes of 'im with gloves. Minnit 'e starts to break loose, you got to jump 'im or 'e'll go it blind and myke trubble.

"Think we can get round those points? I don't see any beach showin' up. Looks like the rock goes down sheer into the deep water. But we bloomin' well carnt stop 'ere. Looks like a bit of a washout. Wolf's found somethink. Shell-fish. Look at 'im gobbling. Crackin' the shells wiv 'is teeth. 'Ear 'im crunching."

With a display of energy that Brett could not match, the sturdy little steward went splashing through the water, up to his waist, plucking at something that clung to the rocks, searching under water.

"Mussels?" asked Brett.

"Winkles!" Walker's husky voice cleared with pleasure and excitement, as if he had been prospecting for gold and found diamonds. "Reg'lar winkle, syme as they sell at 'ome off the barrers— Tuppence a pint. Pyper bag and a pin chucked in. On'y they're biled. They're a bit slimy, raw. May be nourishing but they ain't what you'd call a speedy filler. If they was whelks, now, there'd be something to them. Try your luck."

Tully had come down to join them, with Malone and Wallaby Brown. The professor sat on a ridge of sunny shingle. Bowman and O'Neill were at the pool. Brett reached a rock and began to detach the sea-snails.

"Give 'em a jerk sidewys," advised Walker. "They 'old like sixty. Want a 'ammer?" He ducked completely under and brought up a stone the size of his fist, tossing it at Brett who caught it on the fly. With it he crushed the snails on their mother rock and, picking out the broken shell, ate the viscous morsels as best he could. They were not unpalatable, but it was like feeding crums to an eagle to appease his hunger in such fashion.

"I want to tackle getting round one of those capes before the tide turns," he said to Walker, gulping his winkles by the palmful, spitting out the crushed shell fragments. "There seems to be a passage between them and the reef. I'm a better swimmer than most."

"I can myke a dozen yards, dog-fashion," confessed Walker. "Better fill your belly first, if you can. You've got plenty of time. I know something about tides. Always went reg'lar for all the Summer 'olidays to Marget or S'Lennards when I was a kid, up to the time I was twenty. It's 'ighwater twice a day, twelve 'ours between tides, six to go out, six to come in, a bit later each day. It's the moon does it. Goin' out now. Enny Juggins c'ud see that."

Brett nodded. After all, the tide wouldn't make so much difference. The sea-snail diet was depressing in one way, in another it stiffened his resolution to find out what better outlook for food there might be along the coast. Birds' eggs! If he could find a gull rookery, there was real sustenance.

"I never saw such a rotten beach," Walker went on as Bowman came down to the water. "Not even a dead starfish. No reg'lar rock-pools, no crabs running sidewise. Nuthink but these ruddy raw winkles."

"Well," said Brett suddenly, "I'm off."

"Look 'ere"—Wallaby Brown was close to him—"what price sharks?"

Brett had thought about them, had thrust the idea from him through a mental door that he had hard work to close.

"Got to risk them," he answered with his lips closing tight, his jaw set.

"Don't worry about sharks," cheered Walker. "They come in with the tide and go out with it. Syme as most of the big fish. I know that. Stands to reason, don't it? Besides, there ain't much of an entrance in that line of reef. We scraped the bottom out of the boat when the wave chucked us over it, like you'd jump a 'urdle when you're tired."

"Maybe you're right," said Wallaby. "I know Sydney 'arbor's full of 'em."

Brett fancied his courage lowering as he stood there listening to the two talking about his chances with the sharks. He waded out a little deeper.

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" 'Ate to see you go alone," said Wallaby; "but I could never make it. Better go careful. There might be natives round the point. Cheerio!"

"Good luck to yer," called Walker. As Brett swam out with his favorite overhand stroke, he heard Wallaby's comment.

"The right sort, him." And Walker's return. "You betcher." The sun was on the water and he seemed to get some sort of vitality from it as it warmed his head, his shoulder and upflung arm. He slid along easily on the ebb, keeping out from the promontory cliff, making for the western cape. Tragedy was vanishing with action. The belief that plenty lay around the corner strengthened. The little slaps of the waves were cheery pats of promise and encouragement.

THE chaps he left behind him—largely because of their inability to make the distance—were taking the matter well. They depended on him to carry them through, he felt, with a glow of responsibility. Here was adventure. Lord, he was living it!

Over the water, above the chip-chop of the ripples, he could hear the little steward singing:

"A tuppenny ride on a tramcar,
Out to Victoria Park;
A thripenny ride on a roundabout
To show you're 'aving a lark.
A tuppenny shy at the cokernuts
An' ninepence for your tea;
You've tuppence left for the ride back 'ome
And there you are, you see!

"Are we downhearted? No! Look at Cap'n Webb, 'arfway to the cape already."

It was not all native ebullition of spirits, Brett fancied. The ex-corporal was deliberately forcing himself to do his bit to make the situation seem less serious. A good sort. And Wallaby. So far—except for the professor's helpful suggestion—it was the Britishers who had come to the front. Bowman and Tully were youngsters, and both, he knew, from inland States and towns. It would tax their best efforts to make that swim. But O'Neill? He had heard them talking about O'Neill's films on the steamer. They were of the athletic sort where the hero showed off his prowess in all lines of land and water activity. Perhaps O'Neill doubted his strength. Somehow Brett did not think him a coward.

Natation was not an acquired art with Brett. He could not remember the time when he could not swim. As the young of an animal that has never seen deep water finds itself stroking by instinct after it has been forced out of its depth into the element, so Brett swam from the beginning. Long practise and keen delight in the accomplishment had made the act as natural as that of walking.

To Brett travel by water, immersed in an element, supported buoyantly in it, not moving upright on the earth, was a translation to a higher plane of motion. He might not break speed records but it was hard to tire him when temperatures were favorable.

The barrier reef, as he had imagined, did not touch the cape. There was deep water between it and the mainland, water that ran in a swift current and a jobble of crossing waves so that he had to exert both skill and strength to get out of the pull of it.

Free from the tug, he trod water and gazed down a stretch of irregularly bitten cliff that appeared to angle sharply south between two and three miles distant, close to where an island rose from the sea, gleaming white under the sun, perhaps with guano. The cliff was of the same dark, shining rock as the one backing their landing place.

Two-thirds of the way toward the turn of the land, opposite the white-topped islet, a deep cleft showed in purple shadow. Beyond it rose a crater, wonderfully regular in formation, an almost perfect cone. Brett estimated it at about two thousand feet, realizing as he did so that he was not an expert in such calculation. It seemed composed of smooth ash or cinder with here and there a ridge of lava protruding, differentiated by shadow.

This waste slope composed only the upper half. The flank of the mountain, to his range of vision, was covered with forest, slanting obliquely down and disappearing in the rift that he hoped might form the outlet of some stream. The sight gave him fresh heart. Timber meant much. Fuel, shelter, the material for navigation, for possible escape, birds and animals living within it, good for food, to be netted and trapped.

That there might be savages hiding there, watching his progress, did not escape his thoughts. They might not have espied the

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group in the locked-in bay. He saw no sign of smoke, nothing but the glassy cliff of obsidian, shore-surf on a narrow beach, the shadowy entrance to the sea cañon, the island, the soaring cone of the crater—surely extinct—and the cheering green of the trees. But he decided to swim along the coast, offsetting the offshore sweep of the tide easily enough, until he was opposite the opening.

The natives, if there were any, might disclose themselves, though if they chose to come after him in a canoe he would be an easy capture. Somehow he felt convinced that the place was uninhabited. Solitude seemed to brood upon it, to emanate from it.

A flock of gulls were flying low, rising and falling. More streamed out from the island. Suddenly they concentrated, fluttering, striking, screaming over a shoal of fish. A school of blue and silver flying-fish broke water not twenty yards from him, skimming on their extended fins, sheering off at sight of him—or so he imagined.

With such a plenitude of life about they could not starve. Eggs on the island for the gathering. As for the fish, Brett began to devise traps of basketry woven from the pliant branches of trees, spread from the rocks or platforms built in the shallows from which they might spear a meal with shafts hardened and pointed by fire.

Suddenly fearful cramps attacked him, first in the stomach, rebelling against its scanty diet of water and snails. The torture doubled him up despite the desperate fight he made to resist the pain. He sank, deep, writhing, then inert. Red flashes shot through his brain, snatches of memory mingled with realization and regrets of the present issues. Pressure constricted his chest, his lungs demanded the opening of his mouth and he battled against it, conscious that defeat, annihilation was imminent.

All cerebration concentrated on one thought that appeared like a far-off light in a dark wood, growing in intensity. He must win through. They were depending on him to find them some way out of the bay where they were land and water locked. He was giving up. His will rallied to break up the apathy that possessed him. He struck out and the pain came back, now in his right leg, knotting the muscles, stripping it of power. Submerged in the warm water he broke into a cold sweat but he struggled on and up and came to the surface with his lip bitten through in his effort for control. Turning on his back, he tried to rub smooth the contorted muscles.

Swiftly as the cramp had come it left him, floating on the waves, temporarily exhausted. The gulls came and their shadows flitted over his face as they peered at him with their beady, greedy orbs and swept off with peevish cries at sight of the life shining through his eyes, though he could not have moved hand or arm against them for the moment.

A little strength came back as the sun caressed his body. He began to paddle himself along, slanting shoreward against the tide. Then to stroke with his legs, clipping them together. Presently he was able to turn on his side and make real progress again. At last he was off the opening of the rift. The mounting sun poured into it and he saw a vision of mauve and emerald, a glen thick set with trees marching down to narrowing water.

It gave him new impulse and before long he had passed from salt-water into fresh; he was swimming up a lagoon, a river. On one side there were glossy trees with dark red bark and curiously stilted hooping roots. He imagined these were mangroves. On the other bank rushes. He tasted the sweet water and drank as he paddled on looking for a landing. The ravine twisted to the left, a deep gorge bristling with forest. To the right the high cone of the crater. Ahead a sandy patch of beach.

Brett was beginning to tire. The engine that furnished his energy was slowing down from sheer lack of fuel. The snails had been an insult. They had acted like a scrap of fat thrown into a dying fire, doing more harm than good.

The fresh water was less buoyant, and the current, though not swift, checked him persistently. He turned in gladly toward the sandy bit of margin that formed the corner of the stream's bank where it turned north into the deep cleft, the land rising on one hand to form the flank side, and shoulder of the crater and, on the other, he imagined, lifting to the sea cliffs. The gorge might be an eruptive cleavage, widened and deepened by erosion. As to that he did not much care, nor contribute much thought.

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HE LANDED gratefully on the sand, shoaling full length like a spent fish, lying there for a few minutes in the sun that was now well up, baking hot, drying his forlorn pajamas rapidly. It was too hot. Already he was conscious of burning wrists and neck that felt as if skinned. His cheeks smarted; his nose, as he squinted at it, was red as a lobster's claw. He was by way of being dangerously sun scorched. As a rule he tanned rather than burned, but there was a quality to this sun that was different, tropical.

It seemed to him it was more nearly in the center of the sky than he had ever noticed the sun before. He stood up and his foreshortened shadow was barely a foot in length. At the equator, he imagined, one would have no shadow at all at noon. The island was not quite on the line he thought. And the idea occurred to him that here was a way of establishing time, to mark the moment when the shadow was shortest and adopt that for noon. Between that and the same moment the next day one could manufacture a sand-clock or a water-clock divided into twenty-four—the professor would know about such antiques.

His thoughts drifted because, for the warm, contented moments, he let his mental helm swing. Suddenly it grew too hot. The tropic rays had penetrated his outer tissues and the blood in his veins seemed scalding. He looked about for shade. Rushes surrounded his sand spit, up the gorge they were neighbored by a thick clump of mangroves where some water drainage seeped and made a swampy muck of the bank. Beyond them towered tall trees.

He saw no palms and wondered at the lack of them. The trees appeared to be evergreens; the foliage reminded him of giant hemlocks. They would create shadow in their aisles and it would be cool there, if anywhere. He no longer panted from shortness of breath but it was hard, painful to breathe, as if he were in an oven.

He got up and made for the mangroves, surprized at his weakness, the uncertainty of his knees, the quick, uneven beating of his heart. He wondered if there was any shadow left back in the little bay or if they were all exposed to the blaze. Once, on a Mexican trip, he had seen two dogs shut up in a corral at noon with only a narrow strip of shade at the foot of one of the adobe walls. The wretched curs were without water and they lay gasping with protruding tongues, closed eyes and heaving sides until he had given them their chance of exit. So it would be with his comrades. O'Neill might get out of that trap—for he still believed O'Neill could swim well enough for that—but the rest of them had to stay there until he, Brett, returned to them with some sort of floating conveyance to which they could cling while they paddled around the cape and into the little river. He had thought of a raft or a primitive pontoon—two logs bound together with cross-pieces.

But, unless he was lucky enough to find fallen timber and be able to launch it, how was he to accomplish that? He had no tool for chopping. A stone ax would take days of grinding to an edge, he supposed. It would have to be bound in a cleft stick—with what? With what would he fasten the cross-pieces of his pontoon?

The helplessness of it all came home to him. A Digger Indian would be more capable than he was, for all the gray matter in his cerebrum, the jumble of knowledge he would have described generally as a liberal education. It was of small use to him now in this ocean wilderness. The forest on the opposite bank seemed to regard him contemptuously, the barren cone to mock at him. It was very hot and very still; the sound of the roof was only a murmur. Vegetation was absorbing the heat, flourishing; the water was teeming with life; doubtless there were wild things of fur and feather supremely satisfied with their surroundings. He only, man, lord of all creatures, a modern specimen, was a beggar at the gate of bounty, an ignorant lackwit.

Nature was cruel. He checked that thought. Nature was as she had always been. It was man who had so changed himself by artificial surroundings that he could no longer cope with the primitive. He shut a door in that direction also. It was the law of latitudes. His race flourished well enough in its own environment, adapted to changing conditions of climate. Accident had flung him here out of his native zone where he was like a hermit crab out of its shell, without another into which to take refuge, naked, feeble, incapable of self-support. Was he not superior to such accident, the master of his fate?

"I am going to find out pretty soon," he

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said aloud as he lunged sweating through the reeds, feeling his powers oozing out of him, dripping away at every step. The first thing to do was to get away from the sun.

A sound startled him, a bird call from the woods, the notes ventriloquial, the more gibing from lack of definite location.

"*You! Oh, you!*" They ridiculed him stumbling through the reeds.

THE mangroves stilted up from black, malodorous mud, mushy and deep. Mosquitoes sang about him viciously in little clouds, biting every inch of him, through his flimsy pajamas, stinging poison into his already inflamed exposed flesh. He was forced to make painful progress over the roots, bowed in hoops, slimy from low tide, balancing himself, clinging with both hands to the main stems. He was well committed to this progress before it occurred to him that the stream would have been his best highway. He was getting stupid with the general lowering of his vitality. He plugged on, too dull to change his mode of march.

Several times he was forced to rest, perched like an ill-fledged bird, or a sick ape, saturated with perspiration, constantly tortured by the mosquitoes. Once in the wood he could pluck a leafy branch and fan them off. The shade was only spattering and, with every motion, moisture started fresh from him until he thought the supply must soon be exhausted.

His foot scraped, was cut. He had stepped on a roughened shell. There were clusters of them on the lower rootlets of the mangroves between him and the water. Bivalves—molluscs—oysters! It was an effort for him to find the word he wanted, but, with it, there flashed up a Tantalus vision.

The restaurant at Tait's, San Francisco! Murmur of voices, subdued clink and rattle of service; an orchestra softly playing; flowers in the boxes filling the private rooms in the gallery; pretty, modish women and attentive cavaliers; scent of cigars and cigarets; a girl dressed in Turkish fashion proffering a tray that held favorite brands—all this as a background, more or less hazy, to a cloth of white linen set with crystal and silver. In front of him, succulent oysters on the half-shell, garnished with lemon; a dish, that held condiments, a glass with Tait's special sauce into which he would presently dip his oysters, tabasco in its metal-stoppered container, horseradish—he could see the little wooden paddle——!

That cleared, leaving him hanging on to a trunk with his head still buzzing, seeming light on his neck, more suggestive of a toy balloon than a head—one of the balloons they let loose among the tables at Tait's. And he had thirteen hundred dollars in his money belt! He heard himself laughing, talking aloud, listening as if it was some one else.

"The world's my oyster—and I have no sword to open it."

He was as powerless to open one of the strongly muscled cases that contained food, that meant life, as he would have been if called upon to work out the unknown combination of a vault and get at its treasure. There were no rocks between which he might crush the shells.

Out of somewhere came the derisive call of the bird.

"*You! Oh, you!*"

A spasm of anger shook him. To wring the cursed bird's neck!

Another memory came up out of his brain like the occasional bubbles forming in the mud beneath him.

The redwood grove of the Bohemian Club. A private camp site and supper party. There was a fire beneath an iron plate and, on the metal, oysters stewing in their own juices until they opened. Then one dug them out with a fork, blew on them to cool them, and swallowed them with gusto. *Ah!*

That was the trick! To get to the wood. To find fuel. Two stones—sparks in tinder—lint scraped from linen, the professor had suggested—then dry ferns, twigs, a fire, flat stones—the oysters atop!

It stirred him up to going on, half blinded with sweat and the cursed insects, groping, swinging, dangling from overhead boughs that gave with his weight. He knew he was talking and could not summon will to stop it. He fancied himself delirious and, with the next thought, convinced himself that this could not be, since he recognized the fact. All his body burned and throbbed with sunburn and fever. He was back in a nightmare as he had been in the boat. Yet hanging on—somewhere there was a way out!

He was walking amid great ferns, green

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plumes that caressed him, met above his head, were cool and springy under his sore feet, giving out sweet balm as he crushed them. High overhead a roof of boughs, springing out from columnar boles. The light was a tender green. The mosquitoes were gone, though he was automatically fanning himself with a fern frond. An enchanted wood of refreshing shadows and blessed silence—the bird no longer mocked.

In his other hand he carried a makeshift bag of his pajama top, gathered in his clutch, heavy with oysters that he had no recollection of getting. Up to his crotch he was smeared thickly with mud, now dry. From the waist up he was daubed with it, his arms coated. His flesh was blotched with red lumps. The mud seemed to act as an emollient against the stings, he regretted not having rolled in it. But he had few moments of conscious thought, his mind ran on a single track to one objective—fire. And there were no stones in this part of the forest. Down by the stream—in the stream's bed—there he would find them.

He tramped mechanically through the ferns to the hoarse strophes of an old banal jingle, repeating it with the sense that its rhythm kept him moving.

"Hayfoot-strawfoot-belly-full-of-bean soup. Hip!
Hayfoot-strawfoot-belly-full-of-bean soup. Hip!
Hayfoot——"

A dyke of flinty lava ran down through the woods, a terrible barrier for naked feet, high and jagged. He followed its ancient flow and came out at the stream where it gathered in a swirling pool below a waterfall that cataracted down giant steps. The margin of the basin was strewn with rocks of all shapes, sizes and much variety. Here, if anywhere, were his sparkstones. There was a thick carpet of moss on flat boulders and he stepped on it gratefully as he set down his oysters and drank like a hunted brute.

The moss, much of it, appeared to be kept green by the wind-blown spray from the fall. There were patches of it quite dry—dry as tinder. He collected all of this he could find and stuffed it cunningly into a funneled space between two rocks that formed a draft. Old camping experience suggested this trick.

Then he gathered dry ferns and wood. Fortune seemed to have changed her mind about him. There was fuel all about him, stranded on the shores of the stream, boughs and logs, peeled, blanched and dried, brought over the fall by freshets. One big trunk projected over the threshold of the stairway. Another lay half in, half out of the water.

First Brett tried the flinty lava, breaking off a fragment by hammering with a rock the size of his fist. Then he tested the lava on stone after stone without one resulting spark. All the time he had a quaint feeling of being his own shadow, standing by and watching the movements of the real man as he tried, stolidly at first, then desperately, frantically, to achieve fire. The semi-madness that possessed him pumped fibrin into his muscles and gave him a false strength without which he must have fallen from exhaustion.

At last, his hands bruised and bleeding, he flung from him the stone that had least seemed to offer success. It struck against one of the two rocks where he had piled his moss-tinder and pale sparks leaped and died in the sun. Brett rose to his feet with a cry that was no longer human. He found the discarded rock and pounded with it against the other. Sparks streamed under his frenzied efforts, some of them fell into the tinder, where they glowed for a moment under his breath—and perished. Brett, squatting, continued to hammer, jabbering with every blow.

"Yah-yah-yah-yah-yah-yah!"

It was useless. With a groan he hurled the stone into the pool and flung himself down at full length, played out to the limit, striving to remember something—to collect his wits. What was it—the moss? What about the moss? It was no good. No good as tinder. That was it—*tinder*. Lint, scraped from his pajamas—scraped with what? Perhaps he could find a shell, grind it to a sharp edge, use that. There is more to the legend of the demigod who found renewed strength every time he was flung to earth than appears to the casual unthinking reader.

To a strong man of any age or race, a throw serves only as stimulus so long as he can move; a hard blow stays him, shaking his head, wary, but he comes on again boring in for victory. Brett sat up. His nostrils dilated. Something was burning. Burning! A tiny thread of smoke went up from between the two rocks of his fireplace. A spark had persisted after he had confessed

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failure. It was a gift of the gods, the possession of which definitely divided man from the brute.

WITH trembling hands he knelt and blew gently, adding dried bits of fern, lightly as a jeweler placing weights against a jewel. He got a flare and a crackle. More fern, twigs, bits of wood, broken branches, one end of a bough. The fire leaped and roared at him as if rejoicing at birth and liberty. He dragged up more wood, tugging without feeling weight or strain. He had enough fuel now to last for hours of joyous flame.

He wanted to be prodigal with it—his own creation—brought out of stone and moss and wood, lifeless scraps combining to make this magic at his hands. He watched the smoke streaming up as if it were the banner of a conqueror.

By this time he had assured himself there were no natives, pacific or hostile. Had there been there must have been some traces of them along the stream—a trail, if nothing else. They would have no cause for secrecy. If he was wrong, this smoke, pluming black from some still resinous fragments would bring them. But he felt the risk was small.

He built up a sort of stove with one flat piece for lid, raking under it some of his plenitude of live coals, adding fresh fuel. On this lid he set out his oysters, and hunkered down, filthy, scarred, lumpy with bites, infinitely tired yet triumphant, primitive as any cave dweller. It was no petty victory to him. Much lay ahead, but he had worked out the first problem—with thanks to the professor.

One by one the shells opened and he scooped out the oysters, broiling hot, using a thorny twig to impale them, swallowed them at the risk of blistering tongue and mouth, supped the juicy residue. Never had repast tasted so delicious. Strength came back as if it were being pumped into his veins. As the blood collected for its digestive duty his head cleared. He became sane again. A little midden-heap of shells collected about him as he gorged. Languor crept over him. Longing for a smoke now attacked him, but he was content.

Against his will his body fought and won for sleep. He woke in the ferns with a start. The bird in the woods was calling again but its note was no longer derisive. It was complimentary.

"You! Oh, you!"

The shadows had lengthened, the sun dipping toward the trees, seaward. Brett felt guilty, but consoled himself with the reflection that perhaps he had not wasted so much time. The tide had turned while he slept and he needed the ebb. Paddles were beyond him and he would have to navigate with the aid of the flow.

He went over and looked at the log that was half in and half out of the stream. It lay on shingle and he felt sure he could launch it. Before he sought another he placed the rest of his oysters on the flat, hot stone—not for himself. He did not want to return empty handed. Water he could not take. Puzzle as he might he could not contrive a container. He would have to bring them to it.

Down-stream he found another log, fairly suitable. And he picked up a pole to use as lever first, then for cross-piece. He had trouble finding the second. At last he floated the first log down to the second, beached them temporarily and went back into the forest to look for vines, taking oyster-shells as blades to hack them free. This was a tedious job against the sappy fibers but he succeeded in getting several lengths of green lianas. Wading into the water he constructed his catamaran.

It was hard work binding the cross-pieces firmly on, the lianas were none too good substitutes for rope and Brett's knowledge of knots was limited. The projections of broken boughs helped him with the lashing and the result, though wobbly, appeared secure enough for the trip. He took along some extra branches to be utilized as a sort of seat for the professor, the rest could ride the logs and paddle with their hands. The cooked oysters he retained in their shells whose muscle-hinges no longer clamped them. He wrapped them in fern leaves and bundled the whole in his pajama coat. Finally he arranged the fire to last as long as his absence, feeding it with two big butts of boughs. With a forked stem of a young tree uprooted by some fairly recent storm, still strong and pliant for poling or fending off, Brett perched himself triumphantly upon his craft and pushed off into the current. The logs had good flotation, riding high, capable of transporting all of them. The stream caught the catamaran in

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friendly clutch and it went gliding along, rounding the sharp turn, making for the sea with only a perfunctory thrust or two from Brett's pole.

Once in salt water it was not so easy. There seemed to be some opening in the reef that acted as principal gateway for entrance and egress of tidal waters. The catamaran got into an eddy and drifted southward and toward the reef despite all Brett's efforts to hold it up. It sagged steadily down in the general direction of the islet, over which a cloud of gulls were wheeling against the sunset, getting ready to settle for the night.

Fatigue bound him close; his joints and muscles were stiffening; but he slid into the water, straightened out his craft and propelled it with great clips of his legs and occasional spells of strenuous stroking, churning up the lagoon with a mighty commotion. He managed to buck the current, to cross it, to get into comparatively still water and, finally, to find a flow that paralleled the reef in his desired direction.

Expecting to have more trouble working into the bay, Brett clambered out again on his logs. The liana lashings still held though the joints had worked loose, the structure was entire, if wobbly. And he felt as proud as the first pre-Adamite who ever crossed a river, as proud as a young skipper working his first schooner into Gloucester under the eyes of all the fleet.

Jaded in body, his spirit reacted to success. The world left behind, remote and inaccessible, with all it had meant to him, seemed for the moment well lost in the thrill of high adventure. The battling against odds, the triumph of wits left him with a sense of exhilaration that would not down. This was life—in the raw, but vivid.

Far back, in boyish day-dreams, drifting in an old flat-bottomed boat about Silver Pond, nearby his Massachusetts birthplace, with hat over his eyes to shut out the sun, a few sunfish and perch on a withe in the bottom, and the book, "Treasure Island," thumbed almost to rags beside him, he had, like every other boy, glorified and magnified his surroundings, transmuting them with the magic of a child's quick mentality until he had imagined himself the chief actor in exactly such a scene as this—sea girt, uncharted isle, a raft floating in the sunset, himself a Crusoe up-to-date.

Those dream-thoughts, registered subconsciously upon the records of his brain, refreshed by coincidence, rose up so strongly that Brett had the feeling that all this had happened before, or, at least, was preordained.

Faint shouts aroused him. He had cleared the cape; the bay was opening up. Two figures were at the tide edge, waving their arms and hallooing. Others joined them—five in all. One sat apart, a tiny figure of dejection, two were lying down by the cliff. The scene was sharply defined in the level rays of the sunset.

Brett had tossed chips and broken bits of wood into many a pool and watched them circle about before the main current gripped them and bore them off downstream, wandering in response to mysterious eddies whose laws he did not understand. Now, some similar vagary of the tide bore him beachward, close to the promontory cliff. He called back to those ashore, his voice cheery. Walker, Brown, Tully, Malone and Bowman waded out to meet him. The friendly eddy relinquished him; the ebb opposed. He poled hard, thrust against a rock, then found bottom, gaining distance. The five of them, armpit deep, caught at his logs as Brett joined them, shouldering the catamaran until it was just awash at the tide edge, greeting his news with eager speech of congratulation and relief.

"O'Neill's got the belly-ache from winkles," Walker volunteered. "The 'Prof' is about tuckered out. Wolf's gorn off 'is bloomin' nut. Won't have a thing to do with the rest of us. We're goin' to 'ave trouble with that blighter. Wot's in the parcel?"

O'Neill was evidently sick in soul and body. He had vomited until he was limp; his face was gray-green; the ends of his fingers wrinkled. But the news of fire and water and food provided revived him to an effort. He had grit in him, Brett decided.

The professor was wan with the long fight of his spent forces of a sixty-five-year-old body. But he had a smile on his lips and in his eyes and essayed a show of vigor. The cold, cooked oysters were shared by all except O'Neill, a skimpy ration for each, yet it fired them up a little. Malone took Wolf's share to him.

The oiler paid no attention to Malone as the latter argued with him, pointing to the catamaran, finally leaving him in disgust. But he thrust the food into his mouth and,

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as the rest gathered round their craft, he came down the beach and took his place with the others, four astride each log, the professor on a somewhat precarious platform made from the extra boughs.

Brett set the stroke, seated ahead on the right-hand log. They all began to scoop with both hands in unison. The catamaran commenced to move along smoothly toward the cape. Inside the reef it was smooth water and they made good progress. The sun sank but it was still warm, the water the temperature of new milk. The sky was clear and brilliant stars came out, reflected in the lagoon.

A moon sailed up over the crater as they made the mouth of the stream, and, stimulated by the sight of the trees, the closing presence of their destination, they drove their way up the little river. Like Brett, they presently lapped the fresh water and that supplied nervous energy for the finish of the trip, halting once, poling and paddling ashore to gather oysters.

When they saw the glow of the fire, burning cheerily, its smoke column tinged crimson, waving in the wind that funneled up the gorge from the sea and made it look like a beckoning, welcoming finger, all hands, save Wolf, gave a cheer, hearty enough, if husky, even the professor lending his voice, and O'Neill, who had been shivering for the last half-hour, keenest of all of them.

They were all badly sunburned by their exposure. As Brett had feared, since noon the beach had held no shade. They had tried relief by sitting in the water but the radiant heat from its surface had begun to actually crisp their faces and they had found the greatest relief from sand burial. O'Neill's skin, from his outdoor posing, had stood it better than any, but he had suffered severely from the touch of ptomaine that had not affected the rest, except for Brett's cramp.

They were not very talkative. They accepted the fire and the oysters as gifts for which they were duly grateful but showed it in actions rather than with words. The wind that had started at sunset steadily increased and sang through the boughs of the great trees in mimicry of the breakers whose booming it out-noised.

Bowman, Tully, Malone and Brown gathered driftwood and they piled the fire, both for comfort and for fear of losing it, though Brett felt sure he could repeat his sparking feat more readily a second time. They would not let him move a finger. Wolf sat close to the flames, unmoving, his eyes, when they turned toward his fellows, without animation, reflecting glassily the red of the glow that played over his hairy arms and legs and swart, short-bearded face, making him look like a Caliban.

O'Neill lay back to a rock on a bed of ferns, reveling in the heat, slowly recovering. He had managed the hot oysters without nausea. They had all come fairly well through the first day, Brett considered, sleepily, and better times were ahead. Tomorrow they would make fish-traps, secure eggs from the bird island. Today they had attained the three prime necessities—fire, food, and water—sufficient for their sustenance.

CHAPTER IV

THE POOL OF KNOWLEDGE

PHYSICAL exhaustion, filled stomachs, comparative ease of mind, coordinated for slumber, and the nine slept soundly through the beginning of the night, despite their sunburned flesh and the stings of occasional mosquitoes. They all lay to leeward of the fire and what smudge it made. The insects were not numerous above the mangrove belts and the wind that drew steadily up the cañon kept them scattered. Stacks of the great ferns made luxurious fragrant beds, even for restless people. The night was warm and balmy.

Brett awoke, looking straight up to the moon, high in the heavens, his body tingling, his emotion centering in alarm. Of what, he did not comprehend. Not a sixth sense, but certain of his natural sentinels, had registered an automatic call that summoned Consciousness. There is no such thing as a sixth sense.

The sensitory nerves of some men are more acute than others by inheritance, training, experience. There is a closer connection between their conscious and subconscious minds. Those who live amid peril, know peril registered in waking moments, whether that danger be constant or transitory, become what is unscientifically known as keyed-up. There is no such thing as tautened nerves. Physiologically such a condition is impossible. They are not thread but a chain of close-lying neurons that may be stimulated into linking up and

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the conveyance of a message, like the nickel filings of a wireless coherer. They may be synchronized, the ganglia stations made more alert by the mental stimulus of caution or of fear that causes energizing secretions to flow from the glands whose utilities science is just beginning to understand.

Of the nine, eight awakened at the same instant, thrilled by a sense of danger. Wolf alone slept on. He had the least ability for control of all of them, the least education, the least imagination. The perils of the boat voyage had rendered his mind torpid, his reasoning almost nil, had slowed down his system. Brett heard Wolf snoring, as, raising on one elbow, he looked and listened, conscious of stirrings from the others, sure they were awake.

Out of the woods across the river there sounded a fearful cry. It was a deep-chested, savage roar—or coughing bay—indescribably vicious. Out of the forest back of them that rose to the cliffs, there came an answer, a hideous, prolonged howl that ululated through the night with a menace bringing the eight of them simultaneously to a sitting posture.

A tremor traversed the marrow of Brett's spine, his skin goose-fleshed and, for the first time in his life, he experienced the weird lifting of hair, not only on his scalp but a feel of ghost hairs bristling where none grew. He had edited descriptions of such phenomena, accepting them as one of the tricks of fiction adventure writers. Now he knew the fact. His throat parched; sweat broke out on him before his will reacted, marshaling force to fight off panic. The wind had died down to infrequent whisperings.

"Mother of God!" he heard Malone whisper, next to him, saw the big Irishman cross himself. "Mother of God, 'tis a banshee!"

It came again, the guttural, sonorous roar beyond the river, the hideous howl from behind them. Brett's imagination conjured up a picture of a jaguar, slinking through forest glades, calling to his mate that the quarry was found, that it lay between them, bidding her join in the stalk. He could visualize them stealing down, nostrils snuffing, eyes lambent, eager.

Silence—pregnant with dread. He saw the eyes of his comrades, wide open, staring, mirroring the light of the fire, their faces ruddied, their body outlines silvered by the moon. Fire—that was their weapon. Brett rose, found wood, tossed it on the coals, threw on some dry fern that crackled as it leaped into a gush of flame and revealed them plainly to one another. He picked up a flaring brand and stood waiting, expectant of leaping brutes. Wallaby Brown and Walker followed his example, O'Neill and Tully snatched burning clubs from the fire. Bowman seemed held in a paralysis of fear. The professor showed no signs of panic though he did not rise, and Wolf snored on.

The fire pulsed, painting rock surfaces, fern fronds, the distant trunks of trees and the tangle of shrubbery that encircled their little camp. The constantly shifting high lights emphasized the shadows out of which attack might come from any quarter. The moonlight, filtering down, caused great patches of mysterious gloom with pools of tremulous radiance.

Sudden awakening in the hour when the furnaces of the body are banked, life at its ebb, helped to emphasize the feeling of a hidden horror that licked hideous lips in ghoulish anticipation, knowing its victims were battling with fear and uncertainty. The moments were packed with dread. Dread crept in upon them through their sight, baffled and distorted by the night; through their ears, listening to strange sounds, unable to place their direction; through their imaginations that conjured up all they had ever stored of jungle lore.

It plucked at their will, strove to unravel the weft of reasoning that urged them to stay firm. Panic slowly rose about them in that awful silence, as the tide rises, inevitable, overwhelming.

"Tchk!"

It was O'Neill, who made the sound, with his tongue against his teeth. His head was turned so that he looked over his right shoulder toward an arm of the forest that ended in spatulate masses of undergrowth reaching to the shelving bank of the little river. Between two of these clumps, gliding swiftly, too fast for definite impression, Brett saw a beast passing with motion that suggested both grace and strength. At the sound of O'Neill's cluck it paused for a moment and its eyes showed like two small lamps, powerfully phosphorescent, green, cruel and menacing.

Then, noiselessly, the creature moved on, invisible against the background of the next copse. It seemed as large as a calf but

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of far greater symmetry. It was followed by a second—a third—a fourth, each padding fast and silent across the open, halting for the infinitesimal space when their orbs glowed green, turning toward the fire and the men who stood ready with their impromptu, inadequate weapons; dissolving into the blackness and at last, entering the water unseen and swimming rapidly across a pool lit by a wide bar of moonshine showing great heads and prick ears, fanlike wakes, landing in dense shadow.

They had come and gone so swiftly that Brett wondered whether they were not fantasms of his own imagination, forgetting that O'Neill had seen them first. Now Walker spoke in a strained whisper.

"W'otever they were they ain't after us. And that 'elps some. Mebbe the fire scared 'em off us but looked to me like they were on to their original job. W'ot did you figger 'em for? Lions?"

"There wouldn't likely be lions on an island," suggested Tully. "Lions wouldn't take to water that way, would they?"

"I don't know about that," Brett answered. "But we don't know this is an island, Tully. It may be the mainland! We've got to go exploring before we find out. To the top of that cone. I think——"

ACROSS the river pandemonium broke loose, as if the arrival of the four beasts had been the signal for the release of a devilish pack that now gave tongue as they raced ravening through the forest reechoing with their howls. Either they had scented or sighted their quarry or they despised them, giving reckless tongue that might perhaps affright their prey, rob them of speed.

The chase swept on; its hubbub died down; broke out afresh. With it there seemed to blend deep-chested grunts of defiance, then a shrill squeal or two of terror. The night was filled with the noise of brutal combat, snarls and howls and roars that suddenly subsided, died as completely as if the earth had opened and the fiendish band taken a short cut back to hell with their victims.

That was the end of sleep. The uproar had wakened Wolf and the savage clamor seemed to have stirred in him some beastly affinity. He stood with his head thrust forward, listening eagerly, with glittering eyes, like some big ape in sympathy with the hunting of his comrades of the wild.

Then he squatted down on his haunches and remained in that position until the dawn broke.

Brett fought back Fear that closed in around him with steady pressure, attacking mind and body. The great ally of Reason, Experience, was lacking. All that he had read, had heard, tended to make him regard himself as the most defenceless of living things. Man, armed neither with talons nor efficient teeth, tender of skin, vulnerable. He seemed like a being out of its element. Every time he remembered the agile brutes crossing the stream, he shuddered and such perverse remembrance perpetually asserted itself despite all the efforts of his will to dismiss it.

One thing they had—most necessary—fire. They must contrive some sort of clothes to shelter them from the sun, shoes to protect their feet, hats to guard against the heat, some kind of dwelling where they would not have to repeat this dreadful night and could feel secure from the beasts that might take it into their mind to hunt them. Weapons, too, must be invented. In the night the odds seemed stacked against them, the land unfriendly.

The cone of the extinct volcano rose naked from its mantle of dark wood. It glistered like frosted silver under the moon and stars. The wind began to gather force again, breaking in gusts, as if great bubbles formed and burst in the blackness, the rush of it stroking through the tree tops with the long swish of the backwash of waves on shingly shores. In the intervals the reef surf boomed softly. Wind and surf emphasized the silence of the night after the frenzied clamor of the pack.

The fire crackled, shifted, ashes shuffled, but all these things were elemental, vast, a part of Time itself. To them the fate of men meant no more than the panic of ants in their underground council hall when the foot of a giant treads on their hill.

The burnished stars, the bright moon, the naked lava of the cone, the wind blowing through the vault, the vexed sigh of the trees—the stark lonesomeness of it all, permeated him. His will retreated, his ego shrank.

Pin pricks on the scroll of eternity. Motes floating in the light. Shut off from even their own little world, marooned, encompassed by danger, huddled under the

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light of stars whose beams had taken a million years to penetrate the regions of the air, a million years to project a speck of golden flame that might be the ghost of a world long since dead of flame, even vanished from the firmament.

To follow such unsatisfactory thought was to commit mental suicide by plunging into the gulf of infinity. Brett roused himself to physical action, mended the fire. The rest were wide awake and he started low-toned conversation.

Wolf remained squatting. He was not far from the brute. Accustomed to heavy toil, constant command, a slave by inheritance, the Slovak was short of imagination. knew no necessity for emotional control and was the servant of his senses. If Wallaby Brown had the limited mentality of a boy, Wolf's equipment was that of a dull child of half his age. What should have gone to brain had over-developed brawn.

He might have grappled with one of the night-hunting pack, Brett fancied, meeting their ferocity with a glad lust of combat and joy in the power of his muscles. Brown alone might match his strength—none of the rest of them. Wolf was the type, thought Brett, that in such savage surroundings, would rapidly lose his humanity, revert utterly, willingly, to animalism. He might even become dangerous to the rest of them unless he was watched and handled. Malone had the most influence over him and Malone, wild, undisciplined descendant of rough Celtic kerns, was none too easy of management or restraint.

Management was needed, Brett was certain. They must combine together, pool their knowledge, their efforts, use to the best advantage their especial gifts. Exploration might determine them to be stranded on the coast line of a continent, but he felt intuitively and strongly that they were on an island, uncharted, far from the lanes of ship travel—doomed to live there for an indefinite period, perhaps for the rest of their lives—for how could they hope to get away? He faced this as a fact though he did not think it wise to try to carry the talk beyond present emergencies.

"THERE are two main things to be done tomorrow, it seems to me," said Brett. "One is to get some nourishing food and the next to find a cave where we can sleep securely. We are down to primitive conditions, for the present. Cavemen's conditions and lacking cavemen's endurance. Back in the stone age. We'll have to manage with stone axes, spearheads and other weapons in case we are attacked by the animals. We may even be attacked by savages.

"Those can neither be found nor manufactured in a day. A cave where we can pile up stones across the entrance, with a fire, smaller stones to throw, bigger ones to roll, seems to me the most feasible. We can make lean-tos, fern-thatch shelters, later on, but you remember the rain we came through before we sighted the place. There is a heavy rainfall here, to my mind—though I am no woodsman—by the look of the trees and the ferns. These logs have been washed out above the falls by the stream swollen in a storm. This may be the rainy season; it may rain off-and-on all the year round. We've got to be prepared for bad weather, both wet and cold."

"I've 'eard 'em say that some of the South Sea natives build what they call tree-houses," suggested Walker. " 'Ow about that? I know the Filipinos build on long piles."

"If we could find the right group of trees we might manage some sort of platform," Brett answered dubiously. "I fancy they use bamboos a good deal in South Sea building. It wouldn't be an easy job for us to cut down a bamboo or any other tree for that matter. A cave first, I think, and that's your job, Walker. You are the only one can do much walking."

"I'll give the loan of my sneakers to enny-one who wants to go cave 'unting," said the steward. "That menaggery we 'eard breakin' loose 'as got my number. I don't believe I funk easier than the next one but it ain't goin' to be a picnic roaming through the woods, thinking every minute one of those beauties we saw swimming the river is trailin' you, licking its bloody chops whenever it thinks of your ribs. My flesh ain't stopped crawlin' yet."

Brett nodded. He had an idea—a hope—that the beasts might be nocturnal in their habits—that they might turn out to be afraid of man—either as a known or unknown quantity. But he appreciated Walker's frank exposition of his feelings.

"We'll fix up some sort of sandals," he said. "Perhaps of bark. Or we may see a cave from the stream. My idea was to try

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and catch some fish tomorrow and to paddle our craft out to that island for birds' eggs. There may be berries or fruit of some kind. We could divide into two or three parties. Walker's right. None of us ought to go about alone until we know more about the habits of those beasts."

"Wish I had a chunk of whatever they were hunting," said Malone. "I'm tellin' you meat 'ud taste fine to me. The oysters was good, but my stummick's forgotten it ever met them. How the blazes are ye goin' to git fish without string for a line or to make nets with, lave alone hooks? Chase 'em up on land or swim after 'em an' scoop 'em out?"

"We might make a dam in the river somewhere," suggested Tully. "Just above a pool, so the water would run out and leave them in the shallows."

"Sure," said Malone sarcastically, "it's easy to build a dam. You do that, my son, an' Bowman an' me'll go bird huntin'. We'll find some salt an' I'll whistle 'em down so's Bowman can put it on their tails. Mebbe there's crawfish in the river an', if you go wadin' long enough, they'll nip your toes an' you can walk ashore with your supper."

"Tully's idea might work above the falls where the pools would be smaller. If there are any fish up there. The trouble is we are none of us qualified for a trip like this."

"It is singular," put in the professor in his mild voice, following Brett's lead, "how dependent we moderns are upon specialized manufactures. We are so accustomed to going to this man or that for the simplest articles that when we are thrown upon our own resources we are comparatively helpless. Take myself, for example. I could never manufacture anything. It is a difficult task for me to drive a nail with any ease or accuracy. As to supplying the nail or the hammer, I should be utterly lost.

"Yet our immediate ancestors—mine, at least—building themselves houses in New England, supplying agricultural implements, found iron ore, smelted it, made their own straps and hinges, their bolts and nails of the hammered metal, wove their own wool for clothing, hewed their own lumber, sawed their planks, built their houses, ground their grain, made bricks, provided for themselves entirely in an inclement climate. Every man was more or less an artisan."

"They had axes and saws, guns and ammunition, a heap of things they either brought over with them or had imported," said Bowman. "We haven't even got a worn out jack-knife. One good ax, a rifle and a few shells would go a long way toward making us comfortable. We're right up against it, I'd say."

"There might be iron ore round here," Tully put in.

"Would you know it if you saw it?" Bowman demanded.

"I think so."

"How are you going to smelt it?"

"I don't know that. I suppose you could build some sort of a furnace with layers of charcoal and ore, and drafts to keep it red hot. The metal would flow off, I suppose."

"Huh!" Bowman snorted contemptuously. "And then what? What are you going to make of it, all mixed up with charcoal? How about the slag? How about your molds and your patterns?"

"Know any more about it than I do?" retorted Tully.

"No, I don't."

Brett lessened the growing tension.

"First catch your iron or other metal and then start experimentation. We're still in the Stone Age. If we advance to the Bronze we ought to be able to do as well as the races who first made that metal. The Greeks, professor?"

"Or the Phœnicians. The shield of Achilles, according to Homer's description in the Iliad, was made by Hephæstus throwing into his furnace copper, tin, silver and gold. Copper and tin formed the earliest alloy, as I remember. Up to four hundred B. C. Then they used lead. But I know nothing of the process—nothing. I find myself a very ignorant old man in these circumstances. Left to myself, I do not think I should be alive very long. I lack both strength and wisdom.

"The ancients stored their knowledge in their brains and taught it carefully by word of mouth and by example. The art of writing has advanced man wonderfully but it has reduced the personal factor of his efficiency. We are too used to go to the bookshelf for our information, as we go to the stores for our physical needs, to depend upon the specialist for anything else except the thing we ourselves manufacture.

"I am a worker in words. Words are

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not useful for preserving life. I doubt if I could catch a fish. I never have done so. I know nothing of cleaning it, I should probably spoil it in trying to cook it. I could pick berries—but I would not know if they were poisonous unless they were familiar species. I can hardly be counted as one of the helpful members of this party," he ended, with the first touch of bitterness in his voice that Brett had ever heard.

"I am a dealer in words also, professor—or was—" Brett said. "I have gone over my own capacities and find I measure up with yourself."

"That be blowed," put in Walker. "You—you've got more guts than the lot of us. You go ahead and *do* things. We'd be on that beach yet if it hadn't been for you, and we'd never 'ave reached it if it 'adn't been for you. I've been in the museums and seen wax models of cavemen large as life and twice as natural—a hugly lot without hany plyce above the heyebrows for brains. They got by—didn't they? An' we've got brains if we use 'em. Got a lot of stuff packed away there if we can dig it up. Necessity is the Muvver of Hinvention. I used to write that on my slate w'en I was a nipper. We've got brains and it's quality what counts, at that."

"You're talkin' fine. Now go ahead and invent somethin' by way of example."

Walker scowled at the mocking Malone.

"I'll match my wits aga'nst your's, my bucko!"

"Let's all tackle the prime problems first," said Brett. "Some of us have lived out of doors, more or less. We've camped maybe, or have been brought up in the country. If we try to remember all we know about fishing and hunting and setting traps we may be able to put the practical things into practise. You know what I mean—woodcraft as applied to getting food. Later, for providing clothes.

"There was a man went up into the Maine woods one time on a bet that he could go in naked and stay there a month. He, or another man, did the same thing in California. There were suggestions that they did not live up to all agreements, but that is the sort of thing I am driving at. I imagine we'll all feel less worried about the animals when daylight comes—I know I shall. Unless you chaps want to sleep, why not put in the time figuring out our united knowledge and how to apply it? How about you, O'Neill?"

"Me?" The actor shrugged his shoulders, the firelight showing his handsome features drawn to a sulky cast as he shifted his position. "I don't know anything about the Daniel Boone stuff. I'm bothering my head how we're going to get *off* this infernal place rather than planning how to make ourselves comfortable for the next year or so."

"That ain't 'arf a bad idea," said Walker. sarcastically. "Got any suggestions, O'Neill?"

"My name's Mr. O'Neill to you, Walker. You're forgetting your place."

"Don't you ever think it. Never 'ave and never will. I've paid out my money to see you doin' your stunts as the bloody 'ero on the screen, but b'limy, you ain't no ruddy 'ero in this show. All that plyce stuff was left on the steamer, went down with 'er, got washed off in the boat. I'm a blasted aristocrat along of you. W'y? Because I've got a pair of shoes, for one thing." He shoved the sneakers aggressively into the light.

"You think you're the only one who's got a 'ome and wants to git back to it. Though it ain't 'ome you're after. It's the bright lights and the big salary, the mash notes and the fool girls saying—'Ain't 'e grand?' —— delight, you myke me fair sick and you 'ave right along. Always 'ad things cut and dried, you 'ave. Now you'll ruddy well sweat for w'ot you get like the rest of us."

"No sense in quarreling, Walker," said Brett. "All our nerves are on edge. You didn't give O'Neill a chance to finish."

"I'll apologize for what I said, Walker. I'm wound a bit tight. And a lot of what you said is right. I'm not much good off the screen. I've always had property men walking round handing me the goods. It's a bit funny when you think I starred in 'Beneath the Southern Cross.' Just such an island as this it was supposed to be. And I was the man who came into camp with the food, killed the beasts, fought the savages, and generally saved the situation.

"It went so big we started to find a real location for a similar picture. The first was largely faked, as to scenery. If we ever get back I'll be able to write the continuity of a true-to-life scenario. But I was born back east in a city and I've always lived in a

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city—when I wasn't out on location—and I drove to that and back in my own car. I never fired a thing but a blank cartridge and I've never caught or killed anything bigger than a mouse—don't know as I've even done that. I've been a trapper and a hunter, a lumberman, a castaway, a cowpuncher, a sportsman—on the screen. I've got all the costumes and I've gone through all the motions but I've never tried to even cook an egg.

"I'm fairly sure I know the North Star but I don't know the Southern Cross. Before I went into the films—Walker's right. He's a bigger man than I am, and a better, if only from the standpoint of wardrobe. If you ever get any dishes you can give me the job of keeping 'em clean, Brett. I might be able to do that. I—Oh, my God!—" he ended abruptly, his face working with the anguish of self pity as he got up and walked to lean against one of the near rocks on the flat top of which he set his folded arms, burying his face in them, his shoulders shaking with emotion.

"Always in the pose," said Walker, *sotto voce*, but there was no spite in his voice. O'Neill's apology had cleared the air. Brett fathomed the poignant distress of the ex-star, pampered during every waking moment, suddenly shut off from a life filled with what O'Neill considered success. There might be something more than self-conceit back of that breakdown. He wondered what home ties might lie behind Walker's remark. Suddenly his fellows in misfortune grew more important, more tragic.

BRETT himself had left friends behind, no near relatives. There had been a woman once but the curtain had long ago rung down on that episode. Professor Harland had his married daughter, happily provided for, free from the parent stem, creating her own world, already regarding her father as likely to pass out of her life before it had reached its own maturity. Harland's wife, he believed, was dead, and there were no other children.

But the rest? Bowman played butterfly with the girls aboard ship, but there might be a family he loved, by whom he was loved. Tully the same. Tully might well have a sweetheart; there might be a touch of real romance there. Wallaby Brown, prize-fighter as he was, was the type who might well have a wife and kiddies—he was such a big good-natured boy to youngsters—waiting for him in Australia, and Wallaby would make a good husband as well as father.

Malone—no, not Malone— He was only a drifter. All his wages went into his belly and to pander to his coarse desires. Still—even Malone and Wolf might have women and children dependent on them.

So far the course of events had moved too swiftly, the termination been too abrupt, the present situation too fraught with uncertainties for such reflections. To be out of the world, out of the hurly-burly, out of the struggle and the shams on a place like this held no terror, no pain of severance for Brett. He supposed he was a bit of a cynic, a bit of a hermit. He had often told himself he was sick of sitting up to the veneer and wanted to put his legs under the cruder table of a more red-blooded life.

He was doing it now with a vengeance. Life reduced to a contest—not against his fellow man, but against natural forces—for food and clothing, warmth and shelter, and safety from the beasts who were stronger than he was but were beneath him, knowing no reason.

The contest appealed to him. It roused up primal, atavistic impulses long since buried under civilization but handed down from generation to generation. From the moment he had awakened on the island he had taken up the challenge of the wild with a zest that, looking back, he now appreciated had accompanied all his toil. But with the rest it might be different. He switched off the current of his thoughts and listened to Bowman, now talking.

"I was born in the hills of Vermont—" There was a trembling catch in the youngster's voice that he forced out of it bravely. "I got some superficial knowledge of woodcraft. That is, I know North American edible plants. I can build a fire—if I've got matches. I used to think I was a wizard because I knew enough to strip the inside bark of birch in wet weather to start the blaze. I've built a shack—with tools. I'm a rotten fisherman—never could catch them when the other fellows had a string. I never did any hunting.

"Once I built a canvas canoe that was navigable. Built it from plans and it wasn't a bad job. But I had all the tools and

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materials again. I worked on farms—our own and others, for two or three Summers but it was only unskilled work. I couldn't plow, I had no knack with horses. I milked, picked fruit and pitched hay, weeded.

"I've read a lot of Dan Beard's books and I must have a lot of odd facts stored away that'll maybe crop out later, but even Dan Beard presupposes tools to work with.

"What else? I read a heap of scientific books when I was a kid—more scraps of knowledge there. Monkeyed with electricity—batteries—wireless later on. Took chemistry in college. Did well in physics and mathematics—and there isn't a thing that helps now. Not a thing!"

"I don't know," said Brett. "Those odds and ends of yours will meet many an occasion, I expect." Bowman laughed.

"I might be handy round a bungalow. In the wilderness I'm a joke."

"No bigger joke than I am," said Tully, seated next to Bowman. "The only thing I am an expert at is driving a Ford." The statement got a laugh from every one but Wolf. Tully went on with his list of accomplishments pertinent to the occasion. It was much like that of Bowman. He added that he was well grounded on Army principles of sanitation with first-aid knowledge of medicine and surgery gained in the war.

"I think I could make a clam-shell knife, or from some other shell. You can sharpen the edge on a rock. I've cleaned fish that way, back East. My idea of a weapon is the right kind of stone bound in a notched branch. Rawhide would be best for the binding. It would shrink as it dried. At least I suppose it would. I've always read so.

"If we could find a runway of some of those brutes that were howling tonight, dig a pit there, cover it over with twigs and then dirt, drive sharp stakes in the bottom, we might get one of them. We could finish it with stones or with a hardwood spear. Then we'd get the hide for strips to make into lines and nets and for weapons. We'd get the sinews to make bows and we might be able to eat the flesh. If we got more of them we could scrape the skins, salt them, soften them with brains, use them for shoe-packs, for clothing. Scrape 'em with shells, stretch 'em."

"Sounds fine," said Walker. "We're getting along first rate. Only——"

"Sounds like Fenimore Cooper," said Bowman.

"It could all be done," retorted Tully hotly. "What if I did get it out of books?"

"It might be done," said Walker, "if you could dig that pit. What was you going to do it with? Clam-shells? Or your fingers?"

"Well, what have you got to offer us that's better?" Walker grinned.

"Me. Not much. I was born in 'Oundsditch, London. But my old man knew a bit about trappin'. He was w'ot they call a poacher. He came from Surrey. 'Olidays he'd take me with him, out to 'Endon, or to Tring Ressyvoy, maybe to the River Lea above Chingford and he'd teach me all 'e knew. Trigger snares for rabbits. 'Orse'air loops and lines. Many a partridge I've copped, and snaked basking trout and pike with a lassoo back of their gills. 'Ow to get frogs and eels. But what's the use? No 'orse'air; no 'ook. W'en I was a nipper I've caught sticklebacks with a bent pin. Sticklebacks and minners. You 'ad to sling 'em out quick 'count of there being no barb. Maybe we could make some sort of a 'ook out of the nails in that bit of a boat. Winkles for bait, or oysters. O'Neill and Brown 'ave got the line right in their silk pajama cords. I might fix up a snare or two. But we don't know what kind of animals there are round 'ere. Don't know their 'abits.

"My guv'nor used to make baskets. Bit of a gipsy, 'e was. I've watched 'im often enough to tackle a weaving job. If I can find some sort of withes or willers, I might make an eel-pot or two. Make some for crabs. Bait 'em with shellfish, weight 'em down with rocks, set 'em where you can get 'em at low tide.

" 'E used to lime birds. Make the bird-lime out of 'olly bark. Smeared it on twigs. Wouldn't wonder but what we might find some sort of sticky stuff 'ere. Showed me 'ow to cook 'edge'ogs in clay. None of them about, likely, but fish is prime the same way. That's all I can think of now."

"You get the prize, so far," said Wallaby Brown. "I've killed rabbits by shying sticks at 'em. Might do it again. If there's any rabbits. I've fished a bit and I can cook beach-fashion. Leastways I know how it's done. Dig a pit in the sand—that ain't hard work—line it with stones—

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start a good fire in it and let it burn down to charcoal. Wrap your grub in leaves—or seaweed—put it in and cover up with more greenstuff. Pile the sand on top and leave it overnight.

"I've seen fish and chickens cooked like that and they tasted prime. Sucking pig, too. Only that took two days. Kanaka style. Natives off the trading vessels introduced it to Sydney and now all the beach parties cook that way.

"Like a clambake," said Tully. "Clams and lobsters, chickens and sweet potatoes all steamed under the seaweed. Oh Lord!"

"Me too," cried Bowman. "I vote we talk about something else than eating. This is worse than nightmare."

"There's Malone to hear from yet." This from Walker, not without certain malice to tease Bowman. Brett smiled to himself. This talk in the last quarter of the night had been a good thing. It had diluted the terror of that horrible clamor in the forest. It had brought them closer together. Even if nothing practical had come out of it, though the suggestions had been—nearly all of them—robbed of virtue by the lack of tools, the conversation had heartened them to endeavors, roused their various ambitions, started the chain of ancient memories revolving the cogs of progress.

The association of ideas was milling in his own mind, tales read in his youth of the pioneers—a curious jumble—deadfalls—jerked beef and venison—the old *boucan* meat of the pirates of the Spanish Main. That last leaped on to the adventures of Bartholomew Portuguese escaping from the Spaniards, their Indian slaves and their bloodhounds.

Bartholomew had found a piece of timber beside a river, and the buccaneer, who could not swim, esteemed it a gift from the gods, for the timber had nails in it from which he contrived edged tools, whetting them on stones, and so felled trees and made him a raft on which he crossed the turbulent Cuban river and defied the alligators.

They must have been spikes rather than nails, Brett fancied. Spikes of hand-wrought iron. There were nails in the fragment of boat which he had not forgotten to bring from the beach, the nails Walker wanted to make hooks out of. An ingenious man might use them for all sorts of useful purposes—as awls—to use in making sandals.

Brett felt his imagination stirring. They were an average crowd of men such as you might find on a city street. No mechanics among them, none cunning in woodcraft, a Canadian *voyageur* would laugh at them for lost children.

But, in their brains was packed all sorts of information, filed away subconsciously, a great deal of it, read or listened to without thought of special reference or need—yet there—records that could be got at, he believed, by the right sort of correlation.

The moon had dropped behind the cone that now loomed dark and mysterious. The wind had entirely died. There was a distinct drop in the temperature. Brett felt that dawn was close at hand though the stars were still effulgent, golden. Already he sensed subtle instinct quickening. Civilization's shell was peeling. He was becoming more natural, a comforting conviction was mounting within him that he could overcome all obstacles.

Malone was making them laugh.

"What would I know about the woods?" he asked. "Sure I'm a water rat. I was a wharf rat to begin with, back in New York, and I've lived my life in ships. Working like a dog in the furnace room an' gittin' me a thirst I c'ud niver git rid of when ashore. Me an' The Slovak, we're two of a kind, we are. Picnics, is ut, an' clambakes you're talkin of? Free lunch was more in our line 'till they amended 'em out of the Constitushion.

"Faith, if I had the materials, I c'ud show you how to make a brand of hooch that 'ud send your troubles flyin' but I niver saw a bird's nest in my life, let alone robbed one. I'm with O'Neill, I'm a free Irishman an' the sooner I'm shook of this blasted island—if it is an island—the better it suits me. How about it, Wolf, what do you know about fishin' and huntin'? Spake up an' spill your wisdom."

Wolf turned his eyes toward Malone for a moment and they caught the fire again, glowing like those of the brutes that had glided through the brush. Then he resumed his position, staring into the night, listening, hugging his knees. There was something curiously alien about him that communicated itself to all of them.

"He was always a queer one," said Malone, discussing him as if he was absent, or a lay figure. Somehow this mode of speech seemed appropriate. "He'd not

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talk to a soul for a week at a stretch," went on Malone. "Macleod, the second engineer, said he was a warlock an' the oilers swore he brought on the storm. Somethin' missin'." He tapped his forehead significantly. Wallaby Brown threw more wood on the fire.

"Getting chilly," he said. And shivered.

In the east the sky was lightening to gray. A dim glow showed behind it like the fire showing through the ash of a reviving ember. Rapidly it strengthened, turned to crimson, then to orange. All about them objects took on shape and color. In the woods a bird called to the dawn.

"You, oh you!"

CHAPTER V

BIRD ISLAND

THEY were a jaded lot in the sunshine, their flesh blistered and swollen with mosquito bites, treading on tender soles, what clothes they had in sorry case, hair disheveled and beards sprouting. Walker voiced it.

"A 'appy band of 'oboes, we look," he said. "W'ot price a cup of corfee? At Lockhart's, in London, before the war, you could get a mug of cocoa, three thick slices of bread and butter—door-steps, they used to call 'em—for thrippence. A kipper or 'addie from thrippence up, 'cordin' to size. Then there was 'Arris'—Sausage an' Mashed, Thrippence. Veal and 'am pies fourpence. Extra large pork pies sixpence. Down Shaftesbury Havenue, the fried-fish shops. A 'unk of 'ake or flounder for tuppence. A chunk of thick peas-pudden for a penny, cup of corfee a penny, baked pertater a penny.

"W'ot 'll you 'ave, gents? We've got hoysters fresh, boiled or broiled, hoysters fried and hoysters on the 'arf shell. Pick 'em off the ruddy trees like cherries. Sea fruit! Oo's coming with me to gather breakfast?"

Somebody threw a chunk of wood at him, which he dodged. Malone made a rush for him, joined by Tully, Bowman and Wallaby Brown. Walker skipped out of reach, his shoes taking him blithely where they could only hobble. The skylarking action broke up the general lethargy, abolished any atmosphere of self pity. Brown picked up short sticks and hurled them with wonderful accuracy at the steward until the latter hid back of a big rock and cried for truce.

Brett wondered whether Walker had not created the diversion purposely. That was one of the chief aims of a ship's steward, to cheer up the crestfallen, divert their attention from their own troubles. And Walker had been a good steward.

The professor was smiling at the chase though the smile had little gaiety or spontaneity and he made no attempt at movement, however slight. Brett walked over to him, regarding him anxiously.

"I want you to play fire-tender, professor," he said. "We'll get up some wood for you. Just stick around camp and take it easy. You'll have two assistants so all you have to do is to boss the job. We'll scare up some eggs and fish and we'll have some real food by nightfall. I don't believe there's any danger from wild animals by daylight. We'll hunt up some sort of a cave-dwelling before dark and establish ourselves."

Professor Harland nodded.

"That will be fine," he said huskily.

"How are you feeling?"

"Quite fit. Don't bother about me, Brett. I'm a little stiff, that's all. Egad" —he chuckled—"I rather wish Brown had hit Walker, not too hard, with one of those sticks he threw. We are creatures of habit and I must confess that my morning cup of coffee was a thing I had come to look forward to as a necessity." Brett nodded.

"And I would give all the oysters in the world right now, with the pearls that might be inside of them, for one sack of Durham and a pack of papers. But we must eat and oysters are the most available. Perhaps we'll have an omelet for supper. Roasted eggs, anyway. One thing I am quite sure of, that we are going to be able to make ourselves fairly comfortable with our united capacities and energies."

"Under your leadership——"

A call came from Walker who had been exploring along the bank of the stream. He beckoned and stooped over something he was examining closely.

"Tracks!" he exclaimed as they hurried up. "Where they crossed the stream last night. Whoppers. Look at 'em." The impressions consisted of five pad-prints apiece, clustering to form a sort of rosette. Each pad was nearly as large as a dollar.

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Walker tucked in the first and second joints of his fingers and applied his hand, palm down. It barely covered a track. They were plain in the sand, emphasized by the shadows; and the sight of them brought back the pandemonium of the middle night, something of the prickling, chilling sensation of dread. They stood gazing in silence. Here was a menace that must be mastered.

Brett's thought went farther. Beyond the mastery lay reward. The threat of a capricious, rainy climate was steadily haunting him. Beasts boasting tracks like these, however formidable, once conquered, would furnish hides and furs, leather for multitudinous purposes, robes for clothing. It meant footgear, the bones could be made up into fish-hooks, into knives. Once established in some secure dwelling, with the food problem solved, or partly solved, they must bend their energies to the destruction of these brutes, if not their entire extermination, which might not be wise, the intimidation of any remainder. The lines flashed up:

> I am monarch of all I survey,
> I am lord of the fowl and the brute.

That was what must be accomplished. Nature was provident enough; but she demanded tests for the survival of the fittest. Unconsciously Brett's lean jaw stuck out with the muscles bunching about it, his eyes narrowed and lines furrowed above them. Walker looked up at him approvingly. The ex-soldier knew men when he saw them; he recognized in Brett the executive who could rise to the occasion, however unequipped.

"Looks like it might be a lion," said Tully in a low voice. Brett was inclined to agree with him though he realized his utter ignorance of trail—spoor, as the big-beast hunters called it.

"Looks more like a dog to me," said O'Neill.

"Some dorg! I never saw a dorg big as those looked last night. W'otever they are I'm going to keep my eyes peeled and stay in the open," said Walker.

"They made their kill last night, whatever they were," said Brett. He was trying to gauge the noise they had made. Lions roared and coughed, he had read. Some dogs bayed; some howled. The sounds might have fitted hound or lion, to his thinking. The gliding forms had been vague but he was fairly certain he had seen no manes. Cougars did not have ruffs.

He realized with a precise certainty that he must abandon his old-time habits of speculation. He was no longer living life at second-hand. What was needed from now on was quick decision—action—the throwing off of everything superfluous to the immediate issue.

"They'll likely lie up by day," he added. "The tide should be running out and the oysters exposed. Let's fill up on oysters and get a start for the island before the ebb turns. If we can judge the flow we'll have the flood to help us coming back. Malone, will you stay here with the professor and Wolf? The rest of us will get the shells. Walker, you might range a bit. There may be berries, or some sort of edible fruit. I don't believe there's much danger—and you've got shoes."

"Don't you worry about me."

THEY shoved off their catamaran with a sort of platform at one end made of broken boughs, slightly interlaced, thickly strewn with ferns to lay the shells upon. Malone started the ember fire beneath the cooking stone. Wolf stood looking on at the preparations without sign of interest. Brett did not speak to him. He figured that rest might reassert his balance. Meantime Malone could handle him better than any one else.

"Isn't there something I can do?" asked Professor Harland. Brett nodded.

He looked for and found the fragment of boat planking.

"These nails are our treasury, Mr. Harland," he said. "We could get them easily by burning the wood but that might destroy the temper. It is fairly soft lumber. You might try to get the nails loose. There are seven of them. The wood will splinter, I think, if you hammered it with this chunk of flint. Don't get too strenuous. There's plenty of time."

He felt it imperative to find tasks for the professor to prevent the scholar from feeling himself too impotent. He judged him by himself. If Harland became imbued with the idea that he was done up he might let down too far for recovery. He did not imagine he would do much with the nails, but there was no doubt that the professor brightened as he took the bit of plank.

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Whatever their latitude might be, there was no doubt as to the strength of the sunlight. The rays began once more to inflame their blistering flesh. The boat trip had somewhat weathered them, but the one day on the beach had for the first time caused them actually to suffer. Wrists and foreheads and necks were in worst shape though lips were cracked and noses red and swollen. The flesh was tender, spongy. Brett remembered Crusoe's umbrella. Better parasols, he fancied, could be made from leaves on some sort of a light frame.

One of the first things they must contrive was some substitute for string to bind such things together. For the present they made chaplets of ferns, plaiting them roughly and setting the crude contrivance on their heads, letting the fronds trail down. For the exposed limbs there seemed no remedy. Sooner or later the skin would harden, he supposed. Meantime they must suffer.

The tales of travel he had edited, the yarns of castaways, usually avoided such painful details, the minor irritants of adventure. He grinned to himself, poling along, astride one of the logs, thinking of his ability to write a realistic story—with what—on what—for whom to read? It was a far, far cry from their ocean wilderness to the land of printing-presses and news-stands.

It took longer than they expected to gather a sufficient supply of oysters. The ebb was not sufficiently advanced and they had to wait. Poling back against the stream was difficult work this morning. Brett was so stiff in every aching joint he wondered they did not creak to his movements.

They returned to find Walker triumphant. He had discovered a thicket of luscious berries, larger than blackberries, full of flavor and sweet. He had contrived a crude basket from fern fronds, lining it with large leaves and had brought back a plentiful supply. Wolf sat stolidly by the side of the stream, Malone beside him. The professor had pounded and splintered the boat fragment successfully to release the nails. Walker had a bit of the wood in his hand with a nail in it forming an acute angle. The steward showed it to Brett as they shared the berries, while the oysters were roasting.

"I can smooth down the wood a bit with some of that rock down by the stream," he said. "Reg'lar pummy-stone it is. Then it'll make the shank of a hook and the nail 'll do the trick. I can rub the point sharp though we'll 'ave to forget a barb. There's fish in that stream—big 'uns in the pool—rising—see that one."

A big fish had risen to some insect and, for a second, exposed part of a silvery body.

"Carnt fly-fish for that beggar. But I can get 'im bottom fishing. A pole, this 'ook, a bit of dry wood for float, hoyster bait—or mebbe I can find wigglers under the flat stones—and part of Mr. O'Neill's pajammer cord for line and we're set. Bet I catch one before you go. If I do you better let me put in the day fishing. You'll find those birds' eggs tasting like train-oil. Ought to be eels in the tidewater and I can get them without any 'ook at all."

"Spear them, you mean?" Walker was showing up well, Brett thought.

"Spear nothink! Where 'ud I get a spear? See that tossel at the end of O'Neill's cord—two of 'em. Two more on Wallaby's. Untwist 'em and they're floss silk. Dig up some worms, tie 'em on the tossel in a big bunch, tie on your line, weight it. The eels 'll go for 'em and their teeth 'll stick in the floss. If you know 'ow, you can snake 'em out before they let go. Trouble 'll be to handle 'em, 'thout a basket to put 'em in. Bet I'll have a mess of 'em for supper. You 'and me over your pajammer cord, O'Neill."

"Sure," said O'Neill sarcastically, "if you'll trade me a couple of safety pins for it."

"I'll divvy with you," put in Wallaby. "Mine's thick enough for two." Brett thought of his money belt. It had three buckles on it. It was useless for its original purpose and it could be ripped up into strips, part of it making a belt for O'Neill, the rest of it put to many uses. If they only had a knife. A flake flint substitute would be a poor one, taking time, probably long practise to perfect.

He took off his belt and the money from its pockets. The others looked at it with some slight interest. Wolf alone regarded it greedily.

"Not much use here," said Brett with a laugh. "But we ought to be able to do things with the belt. You take it to hold up your lowers, O'Neill. I'll stow thi-

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cash away somewhere. The gold is metal. It may come in handy if we are able to melt it down. You've got pockets in your trousers, Professor, I wish you'd take care of this for me."

He made up the currency into a slim roll. Wolf's covetous eyes never left it. Professor Harland opened the roll, counted it.

"Eleven hundred dollars," he announced.

"Correct," said Brett. "Purchasing power nil. Here's two hundred in gold, a little more valuable. Represents my capital, all of which I would gladly swap at this minute for a good knife and a sack of tobacco."

"I'd give twice that, if I had it," said Malone, "for a slab of chewin' and ha'f a pint of whisky. 'Speshully the whisky. I sure need a drink worse than I ever did in my life—with less chance of gettin' it."

"Oysters are ready," Brett announced. "Pick 'em as they open. Here's your belt, O'Neill. We may need some of it back after a while."

THE professor ate several oysters thoughtfully.

"Not a bad breakfast," he said finally. "I have been wondering what crude races do for string and rope. There is some long-stemmed grass over there that seems fairly strong. Perhaps it could be plaited."

"They make sennit," announced Walker. "Three-ply braided up from palm fiber or from stringy bark stuff. Sailors make it from grass and straw for hats. Natives use the three-ply plait to make up bigger ropes. I ain't seen any palm trees so far and I don't know what kind of bark they use. But they 'ad to find it out and we ought to be able to."

"We've got a lot to find out," said Tully. "Our brains ought to be as good as a savage's. There are sinews and guts we could use. And there's the *tapa* cloth they wear. Isn't that made from the inside bark of a tree?"

"Paper mulberry," answered Brett. Odds and ends of what he had read were forming in line now. "They soak it and pound it with clubs. I wouldn't know a paper mulberry if they grew here but there may be other trees with the same sort of inner bark. Like birch. It's a matter of experiment. We'd better be starting after the eggs before the ebb gives out. Walker, you're going to fish. Professor, you'll stay in camp and watch the fire. Wolf, will you come for eggs with us?"

It was the first time he had spoken directly to Wolf since he had noticed the change in him. The oiler did not show any signs that he had heard. Malone slapped him on the shoulder and repeated the question. Wolf suddenly bounded to his feet, a rock in one hand and stood snarling, his eyes blood-shot.

"Better lave him alone a bit," said Malone. "He'll sleep it off. Maybe I'd better stick around and keep an eye on him."

"All right. Five of us are enough to handle the raft. Some day we'll manage a canoe and paddles."

"Some day? You talk as if we were here for the rest of our lives. How long do you suppose we'll have to stay here before we are taken off?"

O'Neill spoke petulantly. It was the first time the thought that had been in all their minds was openly broached. They looked at each other.

"You know as much about it as I do, O'Neill," Brett answered. "I don't know where we are. We may even be on the mainland, though I doubt it. We may be somewhere near the regular route of ships. If we are not taken off in that way we shall have to stay here until we can manufacture tools, first of all, and then build a seaworthy craft."

"A fat chance we'd have of making land," said Bowman. "We don't know which way to go to hit the nearest land. It may be thousands of miles away. We haven't any compass, we can't navigate. A fat chance! To make a start from nowhere to some place unknown!"

"Just as fat a chance of building a boat without nails or an ax or even a knife. What 'll we do for sails—row the thousands of miles? We've got as much chance of getting off this place as they have of serving ice-cream in ——!" Bowman's voice was bitter. He slumped dejectedly on a log. "Look at us," he went on. "A fine bunch we are, a helpless, hopeless lot of castaways without clothes or weapons, trapped here, cut off from life—from everything—like—like——!"

"A group of fleas afloat on a shingle!" Wallaby Brown laughed at his own metaphor. It was a hearty laugh, good to hear,

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somehow warming. "I don't look at it that way," he went on. "Men 'ave been shipwrecked before and come out all right. We're a blamed sight better off than we were last night. We've got fire and grub, we ain't going to starve. You said something about our brains being better than a cannibal's just now, Tully. I don't bank much on mine but I do on Mr. Brett's there.

"We've got along so far and we'll get along all right for grub and clothes and we'll build a boat if we have to. One thing's sure, it's no use belly-aching about it. Quitting in the first round before you get warmed up. There's the professor. Old enough to be the daddy of any of us, to be your grand-daddy, Bowman—without offense to you, professor. He's forgot more'n you've learned. Lived in a city all his life, likely. Ain't used to roughing it. Misses his cup of coffee and his pipe and morning paper and all the rest of the things a blamed sight more'n you do. 'Aven't heard a whimper out of *him*. Game, 'e is. Lord, you've got all your limbs and your eyesight, ain't you? You can see and smell and hear and walk and you're full of breakfast. What more do you want?"

Walker put down the tackle he had been fussing over.

"That's the way to talk," he cried. "I don't know if you boys went overseas or not. I did. I've lived knee-deep in mud and blood, I 'ave, slept in a funk-hole and seen the gas comin' down the wind after we'd been sprayed with shells for 'arf the day. I've lived on emergency rations with the fear of Gawd in my empty belly, prayin' I'd be wounded and git a chance at Blighty. I've gone over the top with the machine-guns bowlin' us over like ninepins. I 'ad three years of that, off and on, and this plyce is a ruddy bit of Paradise beside that, sonny. You don't know when you're well orf. Are we down 'earted? *No!* Now I'm going fishing. This, w'y this is a bloomin' picnic!"

"You're right, Walker," said Tully, his face reddening for all the sunburn. "I had no call to grouch. I saw a bit of the other side. So did Bowman. I reckon we'll make out somehow."

Walker turned and grinned on his way to the pool.

"Now you're talking. Cheerio!"

"It isn't the luxuries," said O'Neill. "Or the—danger. I mean from those brutes we heard last night. It's having a slice cut out of your life. After a man has worked up to where he begins to taste success——"

Malone interrupted him. There was friction between the oiler and the film star that Brett fancied was deeper rooted than any cause growing from Malone's resentment of the actor's occasional flashes of implied superiority.

"Missin' the sweeties an' the mash-notes, O'Neill—if that's your name? Missin' drivin' up in the swell car an' dollin' up in the fine clothes to peacock in front of a camery? Thinkin' you'll not be pullin' down the big salary by the time you get back? Fearin' the girlies will forget how handsome an' brave ye are? There's no stars an' no supers here, my bucko. We'll all be eatin' equal an' workin' equal, I'm thinkin'."

O'Neill stood with clenched fists, dramatically posed, his eyes flashing with rage. He turned on his heel as Malone snickered and strode off among the ferns.

"There's small sense in stirring up trouble, Malone," said Brett. "We've got enough on our hands as it is. We've got to all pull together."

He spoke sharply. The authority in his voice surprized himself somewhat. Malone whirled, his face ugly with temper. Wallaby Brown came closer to Brett. Tully and Bowman ranged themselves with him.

"Figgerin' to boss the crowd?" asked Malone. "Got a majority all ready? Let me tell you something. You may have been travelin' first-class aboard the steamer but this is another sort of boat we're in. For two cents I'd——"

Brett went hot with sudden rage as if his blood had suddenly risen to boiling-point. His fists balled. Reason he set aside and knew only an overpowering emotion to slug it out with Malone, regardless of the fact of physical discrepancy. He would be no match for Malone, rough and tumble fighter of groggery and fire-room. He shook off Brown's clasp on his arm. The sneer on Malone's face maddened him. He had never been in a fight since he was a boy. But he seemed to have suffered a sea-change, to have stepped entirely into the primitive.

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A WHOOP from Walker saved the situation. A whoop followed by a mighty splash and a gurgling cry for help. They saw the steward up to his neck in water, one arm holding a limber pole that he had torn from a sapling. The impromptu rod was bent double, the line was taut. Circles distinct from those of Walker's making showed where a fish was on.

Then the fisherman's foot slipped and he disappeared. The pole was jerked from his hand and went sliding off, dragged now and then beneath the surface. Brett made a running dive and, as his head broke water, he saw Walker once more on his feet, sputtering, gesticulating.

"Get 'im, guv'nor! Get 'im! 'E's still on. Swim after it. A whacker, 'e was. There's no barb on that hook. Don't lose 'im!"

Brett struck out after the pole, grasped it and swam on to the far side of the pool where he got foothold on some shelving rocks. Walker was jumping up and down in his excitement, shouting directions. Every one but O'Neill was on the bank watching, enthusiastic, everything forgotten in their sporting instinct.

"Don't play 'im, guv'nor. Don't give 'im any slack. 'Old 'im! 'Old 'im tight! It's fair in 'is ruddy jaw. I'm coming over."

Walker ran for the rocks forming the lower end of the pool, leaping along them, making a jump across the channel, landing safely, arriving breathless beside Brett. The fish was swimming strongly at the end of the makeshift tackle, showing a broad side of silver occasionally. Brett stood braced with the butt of the pole in both hands. It bent ominously, it cracked, it sagged.

The gallery broke out into volleys of advice. O'Neill had come out of the ferns and stood with the rest, intent on the battle. It was not a question of the food supply but purely sporting instinct that had brought even Wolf back to normal for the moment. Walker was in the water, stooping, arms extended.

"Git 'im in, guv'nor, haul 'im in and I'll stick my fingers in 'is gills! The rod's going, grab the line!"

Brett reached for the line, reached it, hauled. The big fish came slowly, fighting back, inch by inch to where Walker stood on a rocky shelf on the verge of deep water with fingers hooked waiting to grasp it by the gills. Then came a churning flurry, a furious fighting of broad pectoral fins. The softer cartilage of the fish's cheek gave way, showing a ragged hole. With a groan from Walker, echoed by Brett, they saw the wooden shank of the hook slide down this gap to the jawbone and then come clear while the fish went plunging away and suddenly dived to the cool depths from which it had been lured.

The hook came in, the nail still in the wood but no longer at an angle. The weight of the fish and its struggles had straightened it. Walker cursed softly.

"It wasn't your fault, guv'nor," he said. "Might have landed a smaller one. C'ud 'ave got this one if I'd 'ad a landing net. That's just what I'm going to make me before sundown."

"You're going to hunt a cave for us as well as fish, Walker," reminded Brett. "You've got the only shoes. I'm going to try and make some sandals from bark but they won't last long. We may need them on the rocks."

"I'll hunt your cave and make that net too, don't you worry."

Brett felt certain that the net would be made. And that many other things they needed would be made in the same way. Walker's sporting blood was up, his interest aroused and his ingenuity would devise the tools he needed.

Brett walked over to the dike of obsidian that he had followed down through the woods to the stream. It was nearly black in color and of brilliant luster, resembling bottle-glass. His firestone he had pounded off but it did not provide what he was looking for, sharp edges that might be used for knives, that could slice through bark.

This rock was the stuff from which Indians made arrowheads and spearheads. He had seen such in museums, chipped so carefully that they were almost smooth, with barbs or with serrated edges. He had picked up cruder specimens on Mount St. Helena in Sonoma County, California. They had never struck him particularly as exhibits of skilled artificers but now he wondered how they had chipped the flint and remembered vaguely a statement issued by a Washington Bureau that the Indians had forgotten the art of making arrowheads.

There were fissures in the dike and in

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some places it overhung the main flow along the edges where it had cooled more rapidly. It struck him that he might affect cleavage of the mass if the stuff was heated and then had cold water poured on it, breaking it up into the splintery fractures characteristic of obsidian. If they were lucky they might find many fragments that could be used without shaping for various purposes. It was worth trying—later; they must not lose the ebb.

He called over Malone and suggested that he try the experiment. The sandals would have to go for the island trip. In time he supposed their feet would callous and harden like the feet of natives but the long soaking in the boat trip had made them more tender than usual. Still, the bulk of the trip to the islet would be by water and he imagined they could stand the inconvenience amid the excitement of getting eggs. He called the quartet up to get aboard the catamaran. Wallaby Brown, Bowman and Tully came up with poles, launching the raft and wading out with it to the current.

"I'm not going," announced O'Neill.

"Why not?" Brett asked him. The film star shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't feel like it. I'm all fagged out."

"So are the rest of us." Brett's voice was crisp with the contempt he felt. He had no authority over O'Neill, for his implied leadership had not been definitely made. He had no right to command any of them.

"I don't see any sense in going after a lot of rancid eggs. Walker is going to get fish."

"He's going to do the catching and you the eating? Well, you've got a sweet nerve." O'Neill winced at Tully's caustic remark.

"Oh, I'll go," he said, wading out to the logs and taking a seat astride.

"It isn't only eggs I'm after," Brett explained as they swung downstream. "I saw a seal yesterday. Scared the daylight out of me at first. I made sure it was a cannibal. Seals may haul out, or whatever it is they call it, on that island. We may be lucky enough to club one—or more. The meat may be good chow and anyway the hide will give us leather."

They made the lagoon, paddling with their hands, timing their strokes, making fair progress. Presently the current Brett had noticed the day before gripped them and bore them toward the reef.

"How about sharks—outside?" asked Bowman.

"They say if you strike the surface the concussion will scare them away," said Brett. "So I've read."

"Looks as if we were going to prove up a good many story-book statements before we live here very long. All the same, I don't feel easy below the knees," said Bowman. Brett shared his sensation. They struck the water as they paddled with plenty of splash but the suggestion of insidious sharks gliding up and shearing off a leg was persistent and unpleasant. There were no triangular fins in sight. There were always fins showing above the surface before attack in all the stories Brett had edited or read.

Now he wondered whether sharks always swam that way before they bit a man. It did not seem reasonable that they would but rather that they would come sweeping up from below, silent and shadowy, planing on their powerful fins. Then they would roll over, their maws opening like crescents, armed with fixed, serrated teeth. *Scrunch!*

Imagination was hard at work with all of them and silence prevailed as, outside the reef at last, they paddled hard toward the islet. Myriads of birds were on it, undoubtedly watching them, unable to decide whether danger was connected with the object that moved closer to them with rhythmical movements.

Suddenly, with a roar of wings, a multitude of birds soared upward, wheeled in flocks, seaward, landward, flying in great circles that dipped so low and close they could see the open beaks, the beady eyes of the alarmed islanders while their cries were deafening, some querulous, some threatening and indignant.

There were gulls, slate and white, their tails rigid as the rudders of an aeroplane, tilting to guide the flight. There were birds with the beaks of eagles, brown of feather, with forked tails that closed and opened like scissors as they flew with enormous spread of wing.

There was one big cloud of shrieking protestants, white below and dark above with white collars, that were particularly vehement in their denunciation of the intruders. They had parrot-like beaks of great size, horny and corrugated, vividly colored in red and blue and yellow and there were scarlet horny projections above their eyes. These, passing so close to the raft that their flying shadow darkened it and the wind of

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their going was plainly felt, ranked up against the wind and then dived, to come up in a fussy fleet fifty yards away.

"Puffins," declared Tully. "I've seen them on Muskeget Islands off Nantucket. They nest in holes in the rocks and—glory, but they can bite with those beaks! Eggs taste like they'd been soaked in gasoline."

The islet was of porous rock that resembled pumice. Much of it was covered with bird droppings. It did not rasp their soles especially for the waves and flying spray had smoothed the general surface that was pitted with holes just about big enough to admit hand and arm. The top was fairly level.

Here they found more birds, squatting and regarding the invaders uneasily but holding their ground though they scuttled off on close approach, revealing eggs on which they had been sitting. Some flew, more remained, crowding close to Brett and the others, even scuffing against their legs.

"First time they've seen humans," suggested Bowman.

"It can be the larst, far as I'm concerned," said Wallaby Brown. "I've smelled a few rotten things in my life, glue factories and slaughter-'ouses, but this 'as got them all backed up. Faugh!" The stench, under the hot sun, was nauseating. With it mingled the strong fumes of ammonia. The guano on which they trod was slimy, fetid stuff.

A bird, gathering courage, perhaps from desperation, pecked viciously at Tully's ankle as he stooped for eggs. The multitudes that had flown off at their landing were now hovering over the island. It looked as if they had taken counsel and resolve to protect their hatching grounds and drive off the wingless, giant bipeds. The clamor of their raucous cries was distinctly menacing.

"I don't believe I want any eggs," muttered Bowman. "I vote we get out of this. We're trespassers."

"I said there was no sense in the trip," said O'Neill. "Good Lord, here they come!"

THE birds with the scissors'-like tails and the eagle beaks had marshaled forces into an angry company that came swooping back to their nesting grounds in desperate resolve to do battle with the invaders. They were frigate birds, fearless, and, their parental instinct aroused, aggressive and in deadly earnest. The rest of the winged army had assembled into squadrons, wheeling into formation with a precision that suggested council-of-war, premeditated fight under the direction of leaders skilled in warfare.

Like with like, the parrot-beaked puffins in one company, bosun's birds, terns and gulls and kittiwakes in others, screaming their war-cries, they made for the offenders, blinding them, smothering them, striking with keen beaks and rigid talons, registering sharp hits with their pinions, brushing softer plumage against the heads and hands of the shrinking men who buffeted vainly at this feathered multitude with little more effect than if the flying legions had been unsubstantial as a cloud, though armed with weapons that gouged and slashed and brought the blood. The humans, handicapped by the buffets of the swirling assailants, supremely at home in their airy element, stumbled over the guano-covered rocks, smashing scores of unprotected eggs, striving to protect their eyes rather than to take a negligible offensive against the intangible foe.

The puffins came into the fight on the flank—as it were. They alighted and waddled in interminable ranks to attack the feet and ankles of the would-be ravishers, each striving, scrambling to lunge with its great horned bill, staining its fantastic grooves a brighter scarlet than Nature had given it. The bites were dangerous, likely to be deadly. Blood spurted from broken flesh and severed veins, the gray-white guano was smeared with crimson in the overtrampled tracks. About the heads of the men was the constant buffet of wings, the whirr of fanning plumage, the hoarse cries of the birds. Every second a peck got home, a vicious stab or a scoring slash from armored claws.

Their wrists and hands were raw, their cheeks and brows laid open, the fern-frond makeshift hats torn away. Every attempt at open sight was an invitation to blindness. Ignorant of any danger, they had left their poles with the raft. Bowman slipped, staggered and went down, clutching at Tully, lugging him to the ground. Brett, peering from beneath crossed arms, saw a great group of the birds swoop down on the pair and cover them in a struggling mass whose harsh screams sounded with a new note of triumph.

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He caught sight of O'Neill, floundering close to a cliff-edge, bent almost double, his upper body almost concealed by the fluttering, raging birds. They were all near to a fall as they had retreated from the aerial attack without sense or thought of direction. Wallaby Brown was beside Brett and he flailed desperately with his arms beating off the soft, persistent bodies that were yet so rigidly boned of wing, so vindictively effective with their natural armament.

For a moment he was free and he plunged through the reassembling group, treading on the puffins regardless of their savage jabs, catching the prize-fighter by the arm. Brown wheeled impatiently. Brett had a glimpse of his face, set in fighting mask but a mask that was bloody and freshly scarred. A bird dashed at its exposure and Brown clutched at it, caught it by the neck, swung it about until it was throttled with a defiant squawk and wings that slowly ceased to beat. Using the dead thing as a club, Brown swung it round in a circle, glaring again at Brett.

"W'ot in blazes," he demanded.

"Bowman's down—with Tully," panted Brett. "You're right at the edge, Brown. Look out! We've got to get them down to the raft."

His hope was the poles. The waterbirds would likely continue the fight until they were well clear of the island. The cliff back of Brown was an almost sheer drop. Brett had lost all idea of direction. He did not know where to find the raft. But Bowman and Tully must be rescued. He had forgotten O'Neill.

Brown, swinging his bird, gained temporary clearance, saw the prostrate bodies indicated by the shifting mass of birds, puffins on the flanks, stabbing at legs and feet. He let out a yell and dashed forward, Brett with him. It was like fighting hornets. For one bird struck down as they strove to dash the mass aside, ten others came swooping in. They fought through a sea of them, the plumage for froth and spray, the compact bodies for the weight of water. Bowman and Tully lay on their stomachs, arms clasped around their heads, bloody from a myriad pecks. They were limp as Brett and Brown tugged at them; their arms hung down like lengths of rope; there was no strength to their legs.

A hoarse, appealing cry, that broke through all the clamor of the infuriated birds, the clan call of human to human, made them turn to where O'Neill in a flurry of wings, of striking necks, of black, beady eyes, went backward over the cliff with upflung arms.

They broke through the flying batteries, half dragging the two younger men. They pressed on, one arm free to beat off the frenzied creatures, struggling through the uproar and confusion to where the plateau top of the island grooved, led downward. Brett fancied this was the way by which they had climbed but his thoughts were fogged in dizziness, he was bewildered by the constant storm of blows; deafened, blinded, stumbling through the crowding, belligerent puffins, taking toll of blood and flesh at every step, smashing eggs that were rotten or half-hatched and whose stinking, sulfurous fumes mingled chokingly with the ammoniac stench of the slimy guano.

If he was wrong, they were done up. It would be the end and he was glad to know the finish one way or another. They were in the primitive, attempting life to sustain their own, fought for the same reason. Man against brute, brute against the man. And only a few hours back he had vainglorioously quoted—

I am lord of the fowl and the brute.

Down the pitch, blood and sweat in their eyes, Bowman and Tully moving like damaged automata, brakes on progress. O'Neill gone, blow after blow, more blood, blood spurting from a vein in Brett's foot, weakness coming, strength and will leaking—leaking—strength running out like water through a sieve. Harsh rock, ridges—Brown stumbling—Brett himself down on one knee—agony to rise!

Brown, with a burst of strength, erect with Tully in his arms. Shingle, slippery shingle, the buffet of wings, the cruel impact of beaks, talons in his hair—water—salt, stinging water, blessed as protection to his feet.

"Fooled the puffins after all—no, curse them, they were swimming in platoons—where was Brown?" *Crash!*

Brett, with the half-conscious Bowman, had pitched down into the shallows.

A hand gripped his shoulder, powerful, vital, bringing back his own abilities. The shock of the water helped. Brett got to his feet and stood drenched beside Bowman,

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arms about each other. For the moment the birds had ceased to attack, were wheeling uncertainly above the driven off raiders. And there was the raft with Tully seated on a log, swiping at the few birds within reach, a pole in both the hands that could hardly muster strength to lift it.

Splashing through the water, they reached the catamaran, shoved it off, menacing their assailants with the poles. The birds seemed to appreciate that their enemies had become more dangerous, that, since they were leaving them in triumphant possession, it might be as well to call a halt. Bowman and Tully collapsed, lying full length along the logs, hands and legs trailing in the water. Brett maintained himself erect with an effort.

There was something that had to be done —something. What was it? He looked at Wallaby, bathing his face. Bloody water dripped through his fingers. The backs of his hands were sliced. He was spattered with blood, his hair matted with it. His clothes—such as they were—were ripped, covered with slime. So with all of them—a quartet of retreating scarecrows. Lords of creation? Brett laughed, half hysterically. Brown gazed at him, startled.

"Licked to a frazzle by a lot of birds—five husky men— Where's O'Neill? He fell off the cliff. We've got to go after him."

"Needn't worry—about him. He's spotted us. Swimming like a ruddy seal." Brown spoke jerkily, slobberingly. His mouth had been slashed by a beak and the lower lip hung in irregular halves. Brett followed the direction of his pointing finger and saw O'Neill. He had swum around a point of rock and he was making swift, clean progress with an overarm stroke toward the raft. A dozen birds flew low above him, scolding but not molesting. In a few minutes he had reached an outrigger to which he clung for a moment, avoiding Brett's eyes. Then he clambered out on the log between Bowman and Tully.

"We was just going to look for you," said Wallaby Brown, his voice charged with heavy sarcasm. "Didn't know you could swim, Mister O'Neill. Nothing like learning 'ow in a 'urry when you 'ave to."

"I was sick yesterday morning, from the shell-fish," said O'Neill. Then he countered. "Fine job we did, egg hunting. Lucky we're alive. You didn't happen to catch a seal or two, Brett?"

"I fancy that island is trespass proof. We made a mistake tackling the job but we've all of us got a lot of lessons to learn, I imagine."

"We've got one peach of a job right in front of us, before we make land, if we don't 'urry," said Brown. "Look at the sky."

THE blue had all gone out of it, swiftly it seemed, though they had been too occupied to notice the weather. Now it was gray and greasy, the sea of the same hue and quality, with a nasty cross-jobble in it that worked the logs up and down and chafed the liana fastenings dangerously. The crater had turned slate color, the green of the trees had turned to almost black and the cliffs looked like rough-cast steel. The surf on the barrier reef had changed its not uncheerful drumming to a roar and the entrance to the lagoon was hard to pick out.

If Brett had not planned to catch the tide going and returning they could not have made it. As it was, the first grip of the flood appeared to be slowly tugging them toward it. A wind blew from the land, irregular, damp, chilling, bearing an earthy smell. The curious thing was that the waves, mounting in pyramids that tumbled to pieces rather than dissolved, threw off splatters of foam *against* the wind. It was phenomenal, the assembling forces of nature gathering ominously. Exhausted as they were, depression invaded them. The air was stifling, it affected them with its heaviness as if they had been deep-sea divers.

The wind no longer blew from the land. It came from the sea, from behind, from all quarters, back from the land again. And with it, or born of it, came a perpetual moaning sound, inexpressibly mournful and foreboding.

The gray and greasy sky slowly darkened. The crater stood out sharply with a steady play of flickering lightning back of it. Gradually sky and sea changed to an awful green, the green of corruption that comes on moldering meat. The wind began to blow steadily and the jobbling seas heightened. The source of the storm seemed, to Brett's feverish imagination, vested in the crater, as if a malignant god of the winds was seated there in some cavernous split, blowing at them, keeping them off the land in devilish malice. Human conceit in the

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face of all elementary manifestation suggested that they were the victims upon whom all this increasing display of force and wrath was centered.

Despite the wind, the inflowing tide, obeying its law, unmindful of surface agitation, set them mercifully down toward the reef gate. The catamaran swung along the spouting barrier, lurching toward destruction with the sweep of the waves, thrust off desperately by their poles which they set against the submerged coral. The high-flung surf showered down on them like a Niagara. At the break they swirled in an eddy, grating, tilting, through to smooth water—comparatively—though even the lagoon was being whipped to choppiness.

The sky was green-black now, like the trees. The whole world, sky and sea and land, was either green-black or deep purple, the color of fresh-fractured slate. There was no effect of clouds but a feeling as if the half dome of the sky had been reduced to a quarter, diminishing the air supply, threatening to crush them. And the tortured air groaned and wailed in its compression.

Suddenly, without thunder, the crater leaped out, clear, living, every seam and rift of the mountain distinct under a lurid light that spread from back of it as swiftly, almost as dazzlingly, as if an inconceivable quantity of magnesium had been ignited. In the glare, spectral, showed for the first time speeding hosts of dark cloud about whose edges played a selvage of lavender lightning. They vanished with the boom of thunder. It crashed about them, shattering the universe. All things were blotted out.

It was near noon but they were in darkness as great as that of a total eclipse. Out of the sky, as if it had floored a lake, the bottom of which had collapsed, torrents of water came hissing, flooding down, the imminent clatter of it drowning out all other sounds, dominating the senses. The force of it literally beat them prostrate. Between lagoon and rain they were almost aswim, breathing water.

It was the current, taking them along as a carrier belt bears the factory product, that alone made it possible for them to fetch the mouth of the stream. The rain had lightened the intense blackness, diluted it to dark gray but they could see nothing beyond three feet, nothing beyond their logs but down-rushing, upspouting water. It had rained hard when they were in the boat but nothing like this. The streams of water, falling from unguessable height, hurt them as distinctly as the blows of a thick lash. Once Brett scooped up some water and tasted it, suspecting they were in the river. It was brackish and he knew. The catamaran bucked under them, threatening to come apart. At the bend where the stream came down from the cañon there was always an eddy. Now it might be dangerous unless they could forestall the peril with their poles.

Whether their pupils became adjusted to the gloom or the latter was still diminishing as the cloud reservoirs slowly emptied, objects became remotely visible. Mangroves, the loom of the crater's lower slopes, rushes. They had come to the turn and the tide still had them. All about the hissing river, rain coming down in gray rods, mangroves showing vaguely—they looked in vain for the signs of camp. That the fire could have been maintained in such a deluge seemed inconceivable. Their progress could not be observed even though their comrades had not sought such shelter as they could find.

Tidal water reached as far as the waterfall. Into the basin at its foot they were barred entry by a low cascade pouring through a narrow pass. Reaching this they would know themselves at the end of the trip, but by no other means in that welter of water.

They arrived at the pool, sodden, exhausted. Bowman and Tully had revived only enough to sit bedraggled astride their logs. O'Neill was in better shape despite his fall. Wallaby Brown did most of the necessary poling though Brett stuck with it. But there was no cascade. The river had swollen. Through the pelter of the rain they heard the thunder of the augmented waterfall.

The brown water, stained by dirt in solution, was scummed with thick yellow froth, whipped by the downpour and the violence of its own impeded rush. Several times they had run on to submerged rocks that showed they were out of the main course as they had known it. Tide met torrent in a whirlpool where they were helpless as a beetle dropped from a bough into a river.

Brett shouted, then Brown, but the veil of rain muffled their efforts. The Professor, Wolf, Malone—whom Brett had designed

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more as body-guard for the professor than warder of Wolf—before it was decided Walker should stay to fish and search for a cave—all were swallowed up, vanished. Somehow Brett pinned his faith on Walker, expected to see him, to hear him announce results. He was a resourceful chap, was the steward and ex-soldier. But the storm had come up with practically no warning.

They were horned on a dilemma, without food, fire or refuge. The rain was warm; so was the water, but it lowered their vitality, slowed the flow of blood, pinched and wrinkled the flesh and beat on their spirits with its inexorable force. It was getting dark again, there was no sign of a let-up, rather of an increase. The chance of light or sun before night fell was remote.

There came a halloo, faint but shrill, in answer to their strained shouts. It issued from the bank opposite to the camp. Swept in an eddy toward it they poled desperately and achieved a backwater, blundered into some half submerged bushes, grasped them, pulled themselves onward and became aware of Walker, in water up to his waist.

"——'s nyme!" he cried, wading out to catch hold of an outrigger that parted under the strain just as they felt gravel underfoot and started toward him. "I thought you beggars were drowned or swept out to sea. I didn't know w'ot to do. Afraid I'd miss you. I've found a cave—a good one, though it's a bit of a scramble.

"We was moving in when the bottom fell out of the ruddy sky. Saved a bit of fire—the Prof did that. Saw the sky darkening an' acted prudent. Malone an' that dumb Finn, or whatever he is, hauled up wood. None too much of it. You'll 'ave to foller me close. I think I can find the way. I've been roosting between two stones an' I've kept fairly dry. I ain't now. You didn't bring any eggs, I suppose?"

"No eggs," said Brett. "We're a hen-pecked crowd, Walker."

"Fair done in," added Brown. Walker whistled dolefully.

"We're going shy on grub if this rain keeps up long. Looks like a reg'lar forty-day-and-nighter, w'ot? I got a bunch of eels and five good-sized fish like the one we lost, on'y not so big. But we didn't 'ave time to grab any oysters an' we won't get any now. Not unless you dived for 'em. The water's risin' fast. Lucky my cave was high up, as it turned out."

He did all the talking during the stiff clamber over sliddery earth and rock, the ground dissolving under their feet in mud on the slopes and the rain shooting down, wrapping everything in obscurity. It had all the force of a high-pressure needle shower. If it had not been coming in sheets but in fine lines of spray Brett fancied it might have brought blood. He believed it came close to bruising. It thoroughly cleansed their cuts and the clay with which their feet was plastered was comforting if not curative.

"'Ere we are," announced Walker when it seemed to all of them they would drop from fatigue. "Stairs to your right. No lift. I lugged over that dead tree an' propped it up. May 'ave to use it for firewood. But you ain't going to 'ave to worry about the lions."

The bark still clung scabbily to the slanting tree up which they clambered lamely to the gaping mouth of an opening in a cliff wall to the base of which they had climbed up a steep, unplanted pitch. Bowman went first, then Walker, boosting him. Tully followed with Brown assisting; Brett last.

Inside a fire shone ruddily in a glorious welcome. Red ashes shone under a little altar erection, on the top of which the professor was tending something that smelled royally. Malone helped them over the threshold. Wolf sat squatting back of the fire, arms wrapped round his knees, his face full, not lifting to greet them, his eyes shining in the glow.

"Some dugout? A little bit of all right, eh? And the fish done to a turn. I'm saving the eels. They'll keep 'emselves fresh. 'Ard to kill. We've got fern for beds an' it's dry in 'ere anyway. Don't smell like a scent-shop but that'll pass off. Bats—millions of 'em. Nearly knocked me over, them and their smell. Git close an' dry off. ——'s nyme, who's bin chewin' you?"

Walker kept up his cheery chatter while they stripped and stood about the life-giving fire. He hung their pitiful garments up on the driftwood that had been carried in, a pile that did not seem capable of lasting many hours. But they did not discount their blessings. They were dazed with weariness, with hunger. The fire showed rough projections of lava for walls and roof;

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it hinted at shelves, at inner hollows and chambers; it disclosed columnar stalactites reaching down; and it gleamed in the solid downpour of rain that curtained the entrance like a flawed mirror. The cavern was apparently a blowout of lava, rent by exploding gases. It was also a House of Refuge.

There were pits on the projecting lip of the threshold into which the rain sloshed and these were their drinking cups. The fish were charred in spots or else half raw, they were bonier than shad, muddy-flavored as carp and they were unscaled. But hunger was the sauce or, rather, exhaustion condoned the lack of it. They slumped at last into their beds of fern, naked, lying close as the dampness of the cave interior broke their sleep, digging into the mass of fronds as dogs would, stiff and sore but drugged with slumber.

Brett awakened once. Whether it was midnight or whether the hidden sun rode somewhere back of the rain-veil he could not tell, barely conjectured. The fire was low, a mass of glowing ashes. He started to summon his will to arise and replenish it when he saw a moving figure place a log on the embers, then another. The light showed the wrinkled forehead, the half sardonic grin that was Walker's habitual expression. Brett relaxed thankfully, falling asleep again to the persistent slosh of the rain, beating on their stone threshold, pouring down outside with a steady, settled rush.

There was no need of defenses against wild beasts. There were no hunting packs abroad. All living things sought their habitations save those belonging to the element that was, for the time, supreme.

CHAPTER VI

WAYS AND MEANS

THE next day passed without hint of sun, with no view from the cave but the vertical warp of rainfall, none inside but the surfaces that caught the fire, niggardly fed with the rapidly vanishing fuel, and the deep shadows. Walker adventured into the torrent and came back with some indifferent clay which he used to envelop his eels before baking them in the ashes.

The dampness mocked the fire, the smell of bat-dung seemed accentuated by it. They crouched about the flame, turning themselves as if they had been roasts on automatic spits, miserable, sinking low in the scale of humanity, save for their qualities of thought. And thought was not pleasant.

Walker reported that the water had risen far up the slopes. Until it should subside they had no chance of getting oysters, no hope for fishing. All loose timber, much that was now being uprooted, would be carried down to the lagoon and out to sea to drift along in the coast current. Some they would eventually retrieve but it would be sodden, it would take hours even of that fierce sun to render any of it fit for firewood.

If—and this was the main fear that haunted Brett—if they had arrived at the commencement of a rainy season there was no telling how long this weather would last. They could not survive very many days of it. They could make two small meals of the eels or they could eke them out for four or five. By that time the fire would be gone. His imagination conjured up a pile of skeletons, of moldering bones, lying undiscovered until their chemical constituents resolved themselves into the floor dirt.

The professor would be the first to go but the rest would not long survive him. To adventure outside was madness, to stay was slow decay, unless the weather changed. It was no wonder that primitive men worshiped the sun. To feel its rays permeating the sodden flesh, to bask in it, absorbing vitality, would engender thankfulness as to a god. As to the Great Being or Power that had conceived the balanced machinery of the universe, such a credence seemed very far off.

Brett was not an agnostic but his belief in a personal god dwindled. They were atoms, composed of atoms, doomed to chemical reactions, unconsidered dust on the great machine that relentlessly whirled on its cosmic mission.

The better part of him, the stronger, fought against this depression. That way madness lay. So savages gave up resistance and died. The silence that had settled on them all must be broken up. Not by discussion of their conditions; the outlook was too dreary. He had one ray of hope in a dim remembrance that equatorial islands were subject to unsettled weather without any definite seasons of wetness and drought.

The Galapagos, for instance, he had read —or so he thought—were subject to rains

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and fogs, with vegetation that did not conform with the general idea of the tropics. But his brain seemed torpid, he could not evolve certainty of memory.

He found himself puzzling over the reason why they had seen no coco-palms. Such trees he had considered universal in these latitudes. There might still be some, but the weather precluded adventuring. They did not yet know whether they were on the mainland or not. How coconuts would solve their problem! Meat in the pulp, refreshing drink, fire from the husks—but they would have a tough job to husk them.

It was hard to pursue any line of thought; his wits were wool-gathering. But he evolved a theory that coco-palms grew only where the floating nuts could land upon fertile soil, that an island where the beaches were mere stripes of shingle at the foot of high cliffs offered no opportunity for growth even if the currents were so set as to bring the nuts. As for the trees that were there, birds might have transplanted the seeds in their droppings or they might be on the relic of a continent that, subsiding, had left remnants of forests.

It was all idle conjecture, useless as the treadmill of a squirrel in its cage. But he was unable to herd his thoughts, the gloom, the damp seemed possessing him, seeping through his flesh, laying siege to his soul. A look at the faintly seen faces of the others, brooding, with vacant eyes and sagged jaws, showed that they too were succumbing to despondency.

He got up, rearranged the logs to conserve the heat, spurred himself to an effort.

"There's no sense to our glooming in this fashion," he said; and the rest started at his voice. "We've got to make the best of it until it quits raining. We need some sort of amusement. I suppose Noah and his family told tales in the ark. Some of us have had experiences worth while relating. Walker, how about you? You were in the war. I wasn't. Physical handicaps, including age. How about it?"

The steward, sitting next to Brett, stirred himself.

"Nothing about the war I want to talk about," he said. "Give you the 'ump to 'ear it. Over there? Stink—mud—blood—death. ——!"

He hunched down again, staring into the lowering fire with eyes that seemed to sight scenes that hardened his face to a grinning mask. So he must have looked, squatting in the trench, waiting the zero hour, thought Brett.

"Walker's right," said Wallaby Brown. "I did my bit. You don't want to think about it, much less talk about it. Leastwise, I don't, and I never found any mates of mine who were in the thick of it that did. I ain't supposed to be what you'd call sensitive—being a prize-fighter—but I'm for forgetting the war and my end of it. Ruddy murder and sudden death!

"I spitted one Heinie—in the guts. Faugh! Shooting's a clean death. Though I don't suppose I 'urt 'im much. He looked surprized, the beggar. A man one minnit—the next a lump of meat on a prong. No grudge between us but it was 'im or me. I'm through with war."

"I didn't see any of that," said Tully. It had not been a good beginning, Brett thought, but at least they were talking. "I was gassed. The next war won't see bayonets or rifles, to my mind. It'll be a war of the chemists. They'd only begun on them when the armistice stopped things. They talk of disarmament and they think of battle-ships and great guns. Take them all away from Germany and leave her her dye works and she can start up again any time. The last stage in making black dye for stockings is picric acid for bombs and shells. The last stages of a lot of dyes is T. N. T.

"Aeroplanes by the thousand and gases that'll kill a man a mile off or acids that'll send him west if two drops spill on him, that's your ammunition. They won't even have to make a hit on a ship carrying supplies or troops. As for a city, they can sweep over it at two hundred miles an hour, a mile high, and annihilate it. After I got so I could breathe and see, I read up all I could about it. Lewisite chemists 'll run the next rumpus. Air raids in the middle of the night with the city asleep, and never waking up, if the enemy breaks through the ring of defending dirigibles and air scouts."

"We'll be out of it," put in O'Neill.

"Were you ever in it? The last one, I mean," jeered Malone.

"No. I couldn't pass the examination. Were you?

"I was, my bucko. I was passing coal on a transport while you were screen-struttin'." O'Neill glowered at Malone and

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the fireman grinned back at him. On the other side of Malone Wolf sat, as if he had been carved out of a log.

"They kept me marking time in camp," said Bowman. "I haven't had much experience of excitement until now, if you call this exciting. I wish I could tell a story but I was never any good at that sort of thing. How about you, Mr. Brett, you're an editor."

"I was, for my sins. I've read thousands of stories, a few good, many indifferent and most of them bad. And forgot all of them as promptly as possible to leave my mind free, save as I filed away the outlines of their plots to avoid buying repetition. Story tellers are born, not made, I imagine. The tribes set great store by their tale weavers. An inherited gift, I fancy. I haven't got it."

"Is it a story you're wanting? I've heard many and told not a few," said Malone. "Here's one that's true and it happened to a pal of mine and myself in Manila——"

He went on with his tale, unvarnished, crude and bestial, boasting of his prowess in drunkeness and lechery.

"They're all alike, the women," he said, "white, yeller, brown and black. The next day—" He looked round for appreciation, sensed the lack of it, and sneered. "Maybe it's too red-blooded for ye? But it's life I'm tellin' you. It's——"

"It's plain muck; that's what it is, Malone."

Malone snarled at Brown.

"You?" he emphasized. "I thought you had some guts." And Brett saw that Malone, out of some form of resentment, had told the smutty yarn deliberately in the hope it would offend, getting some malicious pleasure out of that desire. There were peculiar twists and kinks in the oiler's way of looking at life, born of long, arduous, sweating hours in a ship's bowels, muscles racked at high temperatures, followed by the inevitable reaction of debauch. He was the victim both of circumstance and consequence.

"I've got guts enough," answered Brown. "That talk of yours makes 'em crawl. I don't suppose you've met a decent woman since you were a kid, Malone. When you say they're all alike, all like the kind you're talking of, you're insulting the good ones, to my mind, insulting all our mothers, to begin with, your own included—and I expect she was good to you, Malone.

"I'm by way of being what they call in the States a rough-neck, but I've got a wife and a couple of kids I'm hoping to get back to some day and, the way we're fixed just now, not knowing if we're going to come out of it or not, your line of stories is muck. Lots of dirt is clean but some is filth. Wolf may stand for it but the rest of this crowd won't."

"——!" ejaculated Malone. "Too bad you didn't happen to bring a Bible and hymn book along; you could have held a Sunday School class. You ought to have bin a preacher 'stead of a fighter. A fine bunch of softies."

"You wouldn't find me so soft if you ever tackled me, Malone. And I can fight a —— sight better than I talk." There was a gloss of good humor still covering Wallaby's words. Brett fancied he would fight that way, keeping his anger simmering, under control, as an asset, good natured in defeat or victory. Nevertheless he suggested purpose and strength. If he did not directly challenge Malone he drew a line beyond which it was policy for the oiler to stay unless he wanted to come to grips. And this he was not ready for.

"Aw, go hire a hall," he retorted. "Who asked you to do the talking for the crowd? They got tongues of their own."

"Brown said just what the rest of us were thinking, Malone, unless I'm very much mistaken. Majority rules, you know," said Brett.

"The —— it does! Because there happens to be seven of you Sweet Williams against the Slovak an' me, that don't change my way of thinkin'; it don't force me to play baby."

Nobody answered him and he subsided, growling to himself.

"I KNOW a story," said the professor, diffidently. "It was set down a long time ago, almost two thousand years ago, and told of the wanderings of a hero and his band of heroes long before Vergil recalled the ancient legend. It tells of love and war and adventure and it is, to me, the greatest story, besides the greatest epic poem, ever produced. If you would care to hear it, as I have translated it——?"

The assent was cordial. Malone gave a noncommittal grunt; Wolf nothing. So it started, the story of Æneas, told in the

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dark cave by the sick fire. The professor rolled off his beloved hexameters with deep feeling, colored by his own enthusiasm, hour after hour until his voice grew husky, his memory clear in reproducing his labor of love:

"War is my song, and the man, who first from the Ilian seashore,
Banished by fate, into Italy came, and Lavinian harbors;
Long was he driven o'er land and sea by the fury of Heaven,
Through the vindictive wrath of implacable Juno; afflicted
Cruelly also by war, or ever he founded a city,
Bearing his gods into Latium, whence the proud race of the Latin,
Sires of the Alban town, and the city of Rome in her glory."

Hour after hour, forgetting for the time hunger and all their discomfort, they listened to the declamation of the gentle New England scholar, his voice dramatic as he told of shipwreck, of imperial Sidonian Dido and her passion for the stranger warrior, of the fall of Troy, of sports, and feasting, of battle, of struggle that was taken up by the gods, of Charybdis and the Harpies, of Cyclops and Polyphemus, mortals and immortals, Dido on her pyre, sinking on the steel—

"With the blood foaming out round the dagger."

So, while the rain poured down unceasingly, they descended with Æneas and the Sibyl into the region of shades, crossed the Styx with Charon, of terrible filth—

"Polling his bark himself, he handles the sails unassisted,
While in his dusky skiff he ferries the dead o'er the river."

They saw Cerberus—

. . . stretching his monstrous bulk in an opposite cavern,
Making the regions resound with the noise of his three-throated howling.

With the Sibyl they flung to the brute—

. . . a sop imbrued with honey and somnolent juices.

They passed the Plain of Lamentations, they reached the Elysian fields and saw Æneas embrace the shade of his father Anchises. They listened to the prophecy of the glories of Rome. The professor's voice faltered to a hoarse whisper as he came at last to the end of the sixth book and they realized how much they had drawn upon his strength for their own entertainment and oblivion from their troubles—

Anchor from prow is dropped, and the sterns are at rest on the seashore.

"There are six more books," said Professor Harland. "I think them best, though they are not commonly studied. But I shall have to leave them for tomorrow—unless I have been boring you."

The hearty denial cheered him and he nodded at them.

"Lessons there, for us," he whispered huskily.

"I'll say so," said Walker. "Some scrappers, those chaps. But they had their boats and their armor. When they were shipwrecked they had their weapons. And the Dido dame served them up a banquet. We're worse off than a bunch of savages, we are."

"How do you make that out?" asked Bowman.

"Well, first place, a savage knows how to make the best of what things are 'andy; 'e knows 'ow to make 'is weapons, knows w'ot is good to eat and 'ow to get it. And 'e's ruddy well satisfied with w'ot 'e's got becos 'e don't know w'ot 'e's missing. We *do*. Twiggo? A savage used to cross a river on a log, syme way we did, astride of it, paddling with 'is 'ands. One chap gets the idea of carving out a log to keep 'is legs dry, maybe 'e finds one that's 'ollow to begin with. 'E thinks 'e's a wonder. 'Ow about us? We know all about steamers with lifts and electric lights and powerful engines, music and fine grub. But we can't myke one. We can't even 'ollow out a log. We can't apply w'ot we know."

"We can apply some of it," said Brett. "I can't imagine knowledge being wasted. We know about leverage and the principle of the wheel. We are handicapped, of course. We have been set back in the stone age, apparently, but, if we discovered copper and some harder metal, or copper alone, we would advance immediately. It took a long time for the savage to evolve the bow and arrow, it won't take us so long.

"Toward the end of the stone age they discovered the use of the grindstone. We can apply that and make fair tools after a little. We can hollow out a canoe, with a stone adze or by burning with hot stones. We can build a house after a while. We've got to apply our powers systematically and

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concentratedly and we'll find our ability growing all the time.

"It is my idea that one or two of us should concentrate on the manufacture of cloth and string, experimenting with pounded bark of various trees for the one and different fibers for the other. Some will have to supply the food and haul wood, some one else can tackle the tool problem, or the housing. We've got to get a settled mode of living in a simple way before we can go ahead to conveniences. Necessities first; then comforts. And we ought to get an idea of what sort of place we have landed on."

"And you bossing the outfit?"

"There will be no occasion for any boss that I can see, Malone. We're all equal here, as well as men can be. Some of us may turn out to be more useful to the general community than the rest but that would be a hard matter to decide. Any attempt at socialism is ridiculous. We each need the other's efforts for the mutual ability to live in any degree of comfort. If any man is sick and unable to do his share the rest will look out for him. If there is any law between us it must be that of unselfishness."

"And," suggested Tully, "if any man is well and *won't* do his share, you can place a bet with yourself that he won't get his share of what the others accomplish."

"Meanin' that for me?" snapped Malone. "I'll tell you one thing, my young sprig, I don't need the help of any of you molly-coddles for me to get by. Wolf and me could go it on our own and very nicely. Remember that."

"Walker found this cave; he got the eels."

"And I brought in most of the wood."

They were all on edge with the weather, the barometric depression, the lack of food. The fuel was down to the last stick, there was a half-ration of illy cooked, greasy eels. And they were acting more like children than men. Brett fought his own irritation.

"We should form a Committee of the Whole, I think," he suggested. "It would be a Ways and Means Committee. Each member would make his suggestions and we'll talk them over. Then we'll split into sub-committees with those who show the most aptitude for certain jobs in charge. Report progress at the evening camp-fire, discuss the next day's work. No need for even a chairman, or we can take that job in turn. Majority to rule." Malone grunted.

"No one likely to vote with me," he objected. "Wolf's plain dummy till he comes out of his trance. I suppose I get all the dirty work by the rule of the majority."

"Figuring you're always going to disagree with us, Malone?" Brett went on without a reply. "I fancy Walker and Tully know more about practical camp layout than any of us. Drainage, site, latrines, garbage. As for kitchen-police duty, we can all take regular turns at that—except Professor Harland." Harland promptly put in a protest overruled even by Malone.

"You spin us the yarns, prof," he said. "That's where you shine over any of us—unless O'Neill wants to show us how good he can act."

With the rest, O'Neill realized that Malone, conscious of his physical superiority to any of them, save Wolf and Wallaby Brown, was inclined to push that forward to the point of quarreling, as an offset to any mental deficiency he might feel on the social side.

"Go on, Brett," said Bowman. "You are elected chairman for this first meeting, anyway. Cont'ry minded, say no."

Brett strove to put enthusiasm into the council. Once started, the ball rolled well. Suggestions begat suggestions. Committees were formed, seemingly to every one's satisfaction. There were to be no chairmen. On Sanitation: Tully and Walker. Provender Supplies: Walker, Bowman, O'Neill Brown, and Brett. Clothing: Walker, Bowman, Harland and O'Neill. Fuel: Tully, Wolf, Brown and Malone. Entertainment: Bowman, Harland and O'Neill. Building: Tully, Wolf, Brown, Malone and Brett. Weapons and Tools: Tully, Harland, Brown, Malone and Brett. Exploration: Walker, Bowman, O'Neill, Malone, Brett.

With the exception of Wolf, whose initiative was dormant but who appeared willing enough to do what tasks were suggested to him—and the professor, named for the less arduous tasks by reason of his age—every one was on four committees and it was agreed that they should give equal portions of their time to each unless it was agreed upon to increase that time on the matters most vital.

As for time, the shortest shadow every

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day marked noon. The professor suggested the securing of a container that could be regulated so that the water it held could drip through an aperture in exactly twenty-four hours. Once that was established, if the container was at all symmetrical, it could be marked off to represent the hours.

"A water-clock, or clepsydra," he explained. "The ancients had the clepsydra so arranged that it played flutes during the night when the registration could not be observed. I don't know how the flutes could be managed."

"Where are you going to get your symmetrical container?" challenged Tully.

"That will be up to your Weapons and Tools Committee," retorted the professor and there was a hint of humor in his voice. "I suppose you expect to try your hand at clay bowls and pitchers and cooking pots."

"Never thought of it," said Brett. "But we surely will. As for the sunny hours, I should think we could register them with some sort of a sun-dial, scratched on stone. It depends, I believe, upon the angle of the gnomon-pointer. Its edge has to be parallel with the earth's axis. I happen to know that because we once bought a good-looking sun-dial in an antique store and then discovered that it was angled for Maine instead of California. I don't suppose we'll ever get one that's accurate. At the equator the gnomon would be almost flat. But we'll fudge out some sort of a time-clock."

Interest began to dwindle as the fire died down and their wounds and bruises began to reassert themselves. They had been forced to haul up the ladder log for fuel. Soaked as it was, it burned badly, giving off little or no warmth, requiring constant coaxing by blowing to do more than smolder.

The heavy rain seemed to act as a curtain, preventing egress of the smoke and the ventilation of the cave was none too good. Silence conquered all of them and, after a while, they huddled together forlornly in the ferns, all their bravery of organizations and plans balked by the dreary environment.

Sleep denied itself to Brett and he applied himself to the fire but the last log would only char sullenly and the glowing embers slowly changed to ash. It was pitchy black without, the same within. They could no longer see the rain but the sloshing, driving sound of it kept on, like a steady hammering on the armor of their valor.

Nature, he thought, was cruel, not beneficent. The Back to Nature cult were only pretenders, knowing nothing of true exposure. Man lived only by constant, strenuous endeavor. He protected himself by artificialities and the forces of Nature waged a steady warfare, a persistent pressure against civilization, angry at the wresting of some of its secrets, the victory over a part of its control.

Nature was a treacherous and unsleeping foe. Man existed in comfort only by improving upon her, by building a world within the world, by the utmost use of his wit and invention. Ultimately the earth would grow cold, man, despite his most desperate efforts, his research in chemistry, his production of light and heat and force and food, his artificial dwellings, must succumb. Then the vegetable kingdom would disappear, the highest forms of life dying first and, in the end, the mineral kingdom alone would exist of the three, as it was in the beginning. Mother Nature would reign in Chaos.

He combated this waking nightmare. They were men and they could fight. Once the rain ceased. He drowsed off at last to the remorseless pelt of it but not before he had summoned the forces of his reason, rallied them, convinced himself that in him was a spark of life that was more than elementary, that was greater in its essence than the manifestations known as Nature, that furnished, not only the will to triumph over conditions, but the power.

The night, if it was night, changed insensibly to day. They woke cold and hungry, tried in vain to sleep again and, at last, saw a lightening of the spaces back of the rain, sensed a lessening of the downpour. Dimly the interior of the cave became visible, farther and farther in. It was easier to breathe. The rain changed swiftly to an ordinary storm, to a drizzle, ceased.

They could see the opposing cliffs and the woods, green once more. The gray clouds, woolly masses driving fast, began to break up, a patch of blue showed, widening rapidly. Birds began to call. A golden, blessed shaft of sunshine struck down the cañon. The gray clouds were now pearly white. The world took on color, warmth. By the sun it seemed a

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little after noon. Great areas of wood and rocks and earth glowed brightly. Vapors began to mount, sucked up from the sodden soil, but the sun lorded it over all.

The river was now a swirling flood, dun colored. The waterfall was diminished to half its height but enormously swollen in volume. Uprooted trees went swirling down midstream or rode in eddies. Many of them would be stranded, there would be no lack of wood.

The sunshine beat on the threshold of the cavern and they basked in it, surveying their changed world, reveling in the heat before they attempted to descend. Wolf, naked, lolled his hairy body on the ledge, first on his back and then on his belly. Bowman began to whistle a jazz tune. Tully joined in. Brett felt vigor flooding him. His aches vanished; his hunger dulled its edge. The professor quoted—

"The Eye of Phœbus, brazen but benign."

Malone rolled a complacent eye toward him. To the oiler the professor spoke a language that was hard to follow sometimes, yet the chip-on-the-shoulder attitude Malone exhibited toward the rest vanished in all his contacts with the scholar, toward whom he showed admiration and a measure of protection.

"Sure," he said, "sure thing, prof!"

The glory of the sun grew stronger. Presently they would be shrinking again from its aggressive rays, smashing through their tender skin tissues. Now they reveled in them. The mists grew along the slopes of the hills. From their cave aerie they could see above the waterfall, but the vapors denied them all save glimpses of a swollen river bordered by trees. The air shook with the rumble of the waterfall, the subtone of the current seaward. Now and then a log would come over the fall, lifting, tilting, diving.

As they watched they saw a whitish object washed down and over in the brown flood, an object that struggled and seemed to be alive. It plunged into the pool, submerged and came up, a living thing that struck the water with its limbs and squealed as it swam, squealed hideously with a strangely familiar cry that made them all look sharply at each other, blinking with surprize, then gaze again at the river where the thing was swimming in a circle.

"For the love of Pete, it's a pig!" Tully leaned forward in his excitement as he shouted and nearly fell off the ledge. Brett swung off, hung by his finger-ends and dropped, calling up to O'Neill as the most available ally.

"Come on, we've got to get it."

O'Neill lit beside him and they ran down the slippery slope to the pool. Back of them the rest, save the professor, too stiff and weak to attempt the unassisted jump, landed and followed them, excited as a lot of schoolboys, shouting as they ran while the pig squealed and shrilled its terror.

Brett remembered a saying that a swimming pig cut its throat with its sharp hoofs when it swam but this creature seemed in no danger of such suicide. It progressed lustily enough, lacking only either sense of direction or force enough of stroke to guide it out of the eddy that swung it round the basin that now was brimful. The natural exit was partly blocked by entangled trees, their boughs locked like the horns of fighting deer, their matted roots offering a resting place for the porker, though with only opportunity to lodge its fore feet.

It was a young pig, white of body, curly of tail and pink of mouth. It was a sacrificial pig upon the altar of Opportunity. It was the first piece of real luck they had come across. And the sight of it made them ravenous where they had been merely hungry. As an apple arouses the secretions of the schoolboy's salivary glands so, a hundred times more, did the pig summon all the emotions of appetite, colored by imagination and memory. They had been moving periously along the arc that is marked with the two goals, life and death, moving far too close to the gradation labeled starvation.

Now the pendulum swung swiftly in the opposite direction. Naked men, racing down a water-ravaged slope intent upon their kill of living meat, with only hands for weapons. They were obsessed with but one emotion—hunger—and they made for their prey with the merciless intent of the famished tiger—without his facilities for butchery.

The little pig saw them coming and knew their mood, knew these weird beings that ran and leaped on their long hind legs boded him no good. He was nearly done up with his struggle against the water that had caught him asleep on an undermined bank,

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with his dive over the fall. He was too weak and too scared to do anything but hang on with his fore-hoofs and rend the air with his useless clamor. Brett and O'Neill dived in together and swam for the trees. Walker shouted after them:

"Don't drown 'im. Bring 'im alive. If you drown 'im 'e won't bleed."

"How about a fire?" demanded Tully. "I'm hungry enough but I can't stomach raw pork. The fire's out and all the wood's soaking, anyway."

"How about this stuff?' Bowman pointed to a great trunk that had stranded near to them. It was that of a tree attacked by blight, perhaps partly destroyed by lightning. One half of it was dead, paralyzed. The bark had shrunk away from a decayed split, like a wound. A jagged rock had caught in the split, rent the bark. It was thick and it showed inner layers of fine tissue, not unlike a birch though the outer skin was very different.

"Strip off the rest of that bark and I bet you'll find kindling," said Bowman. "You brought over some of those flints, Malone, didn't you? Let's all take a whack at starting a fire."

Brett's suggestion of fracturing the flinty dike by fire and water had been carried out by Malone successfully and he had taken the most likely looking fragments to the cave before the storm broke. The obsidian had ruptured conchoidally with concave depressions and convex elevations surrounded by more or less jagged and thin edges, sharp enough but presenting the difficulties of a badly hacked blade. Some of these curving surfaces comfortably fitted the palm, forming a species of handle for the broken margin. Others suggested heads for weapons, from slivers for arrows to jagged pieces that, bound in cleft or forked sticks, would make effective tomahawks or clubs.

Malone ran back to the cave and the professor threw down to him the broken flints. Tully, Bowman, Brown, Walker and Malone started searching for stones that looked likely contacts for sparks, testing them, tossing them away, all feverishly striving to conjure the precious element out of the rocks as Moses once brought water. Wolf, balked by the flood, stood on the verge of it watching the chase.

Had it not been of such deadly earnest to all of them the triangular water combat would have been ludicrous as the chasing of a greased pig at a fair. O'Neill and Brett both grabbed a hind leg at the same moment and drew the pig under water. Its frenzied kicks forced them to let go after all three had submerged. The frightened brute snapped at them, gulped water, went under and emerged again while they tried to get a grip on it that would let them tow it to land. Brett appraised Walker's advice as good. Drowned pig would be apt to have its blood coagulated.

At last the porker found some lodgment on a boulder in shallower water. Chasing it closely, the swimmers touched bottom, flung themselves on their quarry and floundered ashore with it squawking and struggling frantically. It got clear, leaving O'Neill with a split chin from a blow of its cloven hoof. With a last desperate burst of strength it scurried for cover. Wolf, yelling, bounded after, overtook it, lunged for a leg and got it. Shifting grip he whirled the porker aloft by both hind legs and brought its head smashing against a rock. Walker came running with a jagged flint and hacked at its throat.

It was murder, bloody and barbarous, that they committed. The reek of the rich red blood in the hot sun, the crude disembowelment, the smoking entrails, the hacked disjointing! At other times it would have been nauseating, but the savage was to the front in all of them.

Bowman had found a free-sparking combination. Tully divided the inner laminations of the bark and found that it was dry and gave out a fragrant balsam. He pounded some of it into pulp and placed this in a recess between rocks as Brett had done. As Bowman sent out a shower of sparks Tully blew on the fibrous stuff and got smoke, then fire. The flame, pale in the sun, licked freely at the fuel and it burned with sudden bursts. Brown tore off great chunks of outer bark, snapped off the smaller boughs where the sap had gone out of the tree, broke fragments across his knee. As the fire grew they lugged over a small tree that had been deposited by the flood which was now rapidly retreating, carried off by the river channel.

The blaze became a furnace. The butchers, spotted with blood all over, smeared with it up to the elbows, brought over their ill-shaped joints. Two forked branches were set up, a slender but tough

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limb was peeled with a flint, thrust skewer-wise through the severed loin and placed across the prongs. Had the fire died to ashes their cookery would have been better but they could not wait and the red and yellow tongues coiled about the meat as the fat dripped down and sputtered explosively. The hairy hide protected the meat in some measure. Walker, as chief cook, turned his spit, gradually they got a bed of ashes and the savor of the food set them a-slavering.

Malone went to the cave with a new ladder-tree. Wolf helped him carry it. Whether from close association in the fire-room and consequent ease and some measure of trust, Malone out of all of them, could get Wolf to do his simple share of the work. The ladder was for the professor, taken under Malone's wing.

"Come on, prof," he cried. "Pork tenderloin cooked to a turn. Sure, the cracklin's a bit fuzzy but the meat smells like heaven."

The professor came down a little reluctantly, assisted by Malone. He was inclined to shrink from Wolf. He had seen the brutal ease and strength with which the oiler had swung up the pig and smashed its skull against the rock. Appetite fought with mental nausea and won.

Salt they had none. They had not needed it with the shell-fish nor missed it with the fish that Walker had caught. It was only as they became filled with the meat that they realized what was lacking They ate like cavemen, tearing the cooked flesh apart with their greasy fingers, sucking them afterward, flinging aside the hairy hide with its scorched bristles.

WITH full stomachs they sought shade where they could find it and slept as if they had been drugged. When they awoke, the carcass of the pig was in a fair way to be wasted, spoiled, alive with buzzing flies in the hot sun. They surveyed it ruefully. To preserve meat in that temperature was another problem they had to face. They managed to separate both legs where the hide had prevented the flies from blowing. These they cooked for their supper. The rest of the pig they buried with the entrails, scooping out a pit in the sand for the purpose, scattering sand over the blood.

"Next time we get a pig we'll cook the whole carcass in your underground oven on hot stones, Wallaby," said Brett. "It is up to the Supplies Committee to get us that pig. There must be a herd of them. Probably that was what the beasts were hunting the other night."

"Or the wild hogs were hunting them. A wild boar is no joke, I imagine," said Bowman. "If we can find their runways we could dig pitfalls and cover them with sheets of bark and dirt on top of that. You couldn't get them with a deadfall. Wonder what they eat? If it's roots they may be good for us."

"Truffles, for instance," suggested Tully ironically.

"There might be yams, or peanuts. Then—I've seen 'em pickle hams and smoke them many a time. We could do it, build a smoke house easy enough."

"Sure," said Malone. "All you need is an ax to cut down some trees, a saw to make planks with, a hammer and a pound o' nails. Easy."

Bowman flashed him a look of scorn.

"You go out and get me a pig, Malone, and I'll fix up the smoke house. I'll make it out of bricks if I have to, or weave the walls like sheep hurdles and plaster them with clay." Malone subsided. Brett swallowed a chuckle. Tully and Bowman were coming to the front. At the beginning Walker had seemed to possess the initiative and it had piqued him a little to find the younger Americans slow to start. But they were getting their stride. Walker smacked his lips unctuously.

"Broiled 'am!" he exclaimed rapturously. "But no eggs, unless I make me a suit of wickerwork armor to fool those birds."

"Meantime," Brett suggested, "the fat we've cooked is going to help us against sunburn. It won't smell pleasant but I'm not so fussy as I was." He surveyed his body, scratched, blistered, stained and swollen and ran his fingers through his stubble of beard. "I'm going to clean up a bit. I look like a Digger Indian and I begin to feel like one." It wouldn't be hard for a man to slide to the bottom of the social scale in such circumstances, he reflected. That was one thing they had to guard against, the lack of such civilizing things as razors and shears, brushes and combs, towels and handkerchiefs.

Malone and Wolf made no ablutions. They laughed at the rest, trying to get clean

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without soap, in cold water. Tully, drying off, fingered a clayey bank.

"We ought to be able to make pots and bowls out of this. It's fine. The sun would bake it or we might make a little kiln after we'd made bricks and sunbaked them for Bowman's smoke-house. We could heat water and boil our food."

"Would they hold water, unglazed?"

"Seems to me I've read that salt will give a glaze. We've got to make salt. That's simple enough."

"And up in Maine they still make their own soft-soap. Pour water through wood-ashes and boil it up with fried-out fat and grease. They salt it out with brine to make hard soap."

"Good for you, Tully!" Brett's eyes brightened as he nodded at him. The knowledge stored haphazard in their brains was cropping out in the right time and place with the proper association of ideas. In one way they were enormously above the savage; they knew what could be done. Once protected against the first tests of Nature as to their fitness to exist and he began to think they would be able to establish themselves with a fair degree of comfort. There was a zest to the contest that began to enter into it.

The absorbing earth, the water-shedding surfaces, the vaporizing sun, combined with the natural flow of the river and the ebb of the tide to reduce rapidly the flooded area. They resolved to spend the night in the cave and make their first organized start in the morning. Toward evening mosquitos rose in swarms and drove them back of their fire, seated in the smudge.

The pork-grease they had smeared on their skins helped to protect them against the wandering squadrons that found them out and also acted as an emollient for their sun-scald and bird-bites. Wherever the skin was broken there seemed to be a disposition to fester. The tropic climate appeared to breed a surplusage of bacilli, eager to enter through the slightest breach in man's armor and destroy him as the creepers and other parasites choked the trees. For their susceptible white man's tissues clothing was a paramount necessity.

Yet they slept. There was no Æneid that night. Slumber seized and bound them fast. Once Brett awoke and heard howling and snarling. He looked out. The sky was cloudy, an aftermath of the storm, the light uncertain. The moon struggled through its vaporous veils and showed him a number of great beasts swarming where they had buried the remains of the pig. He was still heavy with sleep and he went back to his ferns secure in the knowledge that their cave was a citadel. He woke for the second time just after dawn and lay in the half light dozing.

As the light strengthened slowly and the rest still lay unconscious of time and place, Brett began to weave a vision of the future. In it were included cultivated fields, domesticated hogs, orchards of selected trees, rows of berry-fruits, even lawns and flower-beds about a low bungalow, with brick sides, perhaps, and a cozy thatched roof, with wide porches where men lounged after the pleasant, healthful labor of the day.

Why not? It was all practical. They could learn to do all this. As for furniture, blind men could make wicker chairs and couches. If Brett had been a man with a home he would—this he had often told himself, feeling the itch for such matters—have been a house-tinkerer and amateur gardener. Some were born with the desire and the knack of handling tools and making things grow. A measure of creative instinct. To bring order out of the wilderness, to bend Nature to his purpose, to build up a little civilization of their own seemed to him a thing well worth achieving. Something in his vitality responded to the call—not of the wild—but its redemption.

A yawn that changed to a sigh aroused him. O'Neill was hunched up gazing toward the cave entrance where a gull sailed by, slanted, peered in and soared on.

"Look at that beggar," said O'Neill as Brett stirred. "Free as the air and we cooped up. Brett, how are we going to get off this —— place and get back home?"

Brett shrugged his shoulders. The prospect appeared infinitely remote, infinitesimal. He could sympathize with O'Neill, cut off from all that made life pleasant, success, adulation, luxury. Yet he felt that he could get along without it.

"You might call in at the steamer office and get a time table, O'Neill," said Walker. "And, while you're down town, buy me a package of baccy and a pipe. Wake up. You're on the Supplies Committee. If you don't want cold pig for breakfast we'd better get busy foraging. How about berries and some oysters, or would you

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rather 'ave a chilled grape-fruit, oatmeal and cream, corfee and eggs Benedict? Shall I serve you in your state-room, sir?"

O'Neill frowned. Then he laughed.

"You go to blazes," he said. "Just now I'd swap all the oysters in the world, pearls included, for a toothbrush."

"Try the end of a chewed stick," said Tully. "Trouble with you is you've been pampered. You'll be growling for a clean suit of B.V.D.s next thing."

It was good-humored chaff. And O'Neill was getting more human, Brett decided, as, with Bowman and Brown, the Supplies Committee sallied forth into the rose and pearl of a perfect morning. Laughter was a great leaven. Walker broke into one of his ditties as they walked down toward the river, now down to nearly normal:

"Oh, 'e used to grind a corfee mill.
And 'e mixed the sugar with the sand.
At the pub around the corner w'en the shop was closed
The drinks all round 'e'd stand.
Well—'e grinds a diff'rent mill just now
And 'e breaks a lot of stone.
And all becos the pore boy mixed
'Is marster's money with 'is own."

CHAPTER VII

PROGRESS

WORK started with vim. Walker went off to fish, O'Neill to gather salt and make evaporation pools. Professor Harland determined to experiment with the production of string and of weaves for hats, for mats and for the many purposes to which it might be put. The string problem was a vital one. It meant nets, the binding of flints to wood for tools and weapons, the tying together of lumber for building purposes. Harland had the patience; his long fingers promised dexterity. Grass, stringy bark fibers and fern ribs were the materials he proposed to practise upon.

Malone and Wolf got in a wood supply. Brett took Tully with him to try to find a camp-site that would be above the possibility of flood-reach. He hoped to find a grassy plateau with some shade and a living spring, with good soil, not far from timber supply. The cave had manifest disadvantages of which lack of ventilation and the stench of the bat droppings were the worst but far from the only ones. Brett had in mind a house on stilts for security.

If he could find four trees making up a fair rectangle of the right dimensions he figured on using these for his corner posts. If he was fortunate enough he might find boughs angling out on all four at approximately the same height. In these crotches they could place cross-poles for the frame, fastening them with creepers or hand-made rope. Then the platform of split saplings—they could use stone wedges for that work—a thick carpet of ferns, plaited sides of wide grasses or long leaves, a thatch of grass, overhanging to shed the rain, and they would have a tree home, reached by ladders, a nest that would be shady, always tolerably cool, for rest and sleep.

All his requirements might not be forthcoming, but he went out with Tully to see what he could see.

Bowman was full of plans for a fish weir that sounded eminently practical, if they could evolve a net. If not, he had vaguer suggestions for traps to be made of wicker; cylinders several feet in length and three or more in diameter with funnel-like entrances, on the principle of a safety ink-well, through which the fish might pass to the bait or be carried by the force of the current, finding themselves unable to discover the small exit.

"The main thing is the weir," he explained to Brown, his assistant engineer. "We'll pick a place down-stream below a stretch of deep water. If we can find a bar for foundation so much the better, as long as it is likely to be permanent. We'll build a loose wall with stones half-way across the river so that fish can cross it at high tide but at low the top of it will be out of water or near enough so as to make it too shallow for them to pass.

"Then we'll make the weir of upright sticks stuck close together to make a tight fence for the other half of the stream. We can bind these together with the same creepers Brett used on the raft. Where the current is strongest we leave a gap. The whole thing is a sort of trap, half of it wide open at flood water which, I figure, is the time a lot of the fish come up river. They'll come in and feed—soon as the tide turns and drops enough toward the top of our wall we close the gap with the net.

"The fish find the water lowering or getting less salty and they start down current into the bag. It's the only way they can get out. Up-stream we'll have the

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waterfall to block 'em, if that's necessary. But I imagine most of the fish that come up with the tide 'll try all they know to get back with it. Anyway we'll see."

"Some plan," said Wallaby. "I wouldn't think of that in a million years. I've got a one-cyclinder brain; that's one big reason why I didn't come away with the championship. I could hit as 'ard as the other fellows, maybe 'arder. I could stand the gaff as much and I was willing to mix it, but you Yanks think quicker. I don't think much, not to really sit down and work things out like you and Brett and young Tully. O'Neill's smart enough, too, only he'd rather 'ave the other fellow do it. Gen'ally 'ad things that way. And the prof', his brains are different. Sort of storage plant."

"How about Malone?" asked Bowman as they went slowly down stream, looking for the likely place for their dam and weir and for materials.

"Malone 'ates every one who 'e thinks is apt to think that 'e's a cut above Malone. Savvy what I mean? Sore at the world. Most stokers are. Specially on ship. They sweat and broil at their mucky back-breaking job, drying up while they chuck coal an', w'en they crawl up on deck for a breath of cool, fresh air, wet an' grimy an' stiff, they get a peek at the first-class passengers all dressed up in whites, stretched out on long chairs, with a long glass with ice and a stick in it an' they cuss 'em out. Looks to them like white to black, the difference between 'em.

"You carnt 'ardly blame 'em. And it gets into their system. Malone, e's allus figured 'e was just as good a man as any one—better if it came down to muscles. On'y 'e'd never 'ad a square show. Now 'e's landed 'ere with the same chance as the rest an' 'ere's Walker smarter than 'e is; 'ere's Brett making 'im look like a monkey; 'ere's the prof gyme as they make 'em an' full of savvy; 'ere's you with this fish-trap an' Tully thinking out pots and pans and soap.

"Where does Malone come in? 'E can carry wood. Back in 'is 'ead 'e knows 'e ain't making much of a showing, that 'e ain't as smart as the rest of you but it just makes 'im sore. 'E still pats 'imself on the back and tells 'imself 'e can lick you. Still the better man."

"How about Wolf—and you?"

"Wolf's 'is pal, in a way. Same grade. Malone jolly well knows I can lick 'im, so 'e leaves me alone. Then Malone's cut off from 'is booze and baccy an' that makes 'im sore. More than the rest of us who use it. Why? Becos this is the first time in years Malone's ever been ashore and sober. By and by 'e'll clear up, I wouldn't wonder. How about these for your poles?"

Bowman inspected them.

"Look like dogwood," he said. "Fine, if we can manage to cut them."

The trees, slim-trunked, grew in swampy ground. Brown found it possible to pull some of them up by main strength, roots and all, but this did not furnish them with any driving point. Hacking at them with the flints they had brought was a botchy process.

"Let's choose our place and get ahead with the wall," said Bowman. "We can tote the poles back and burn them in the fire. We can scrape off the char better than we can trim the wood and burning will harden them." Brown nodded recognition of the wisdom and they waded out into the stream to decide upon their location. Noon found them hard at it piling stones when a call from camp summoned them. There were berries, broiled fish-with-salt and Walker, as chef, produced triumphantly from the ashes some brown tubers that looked like enlarged sweet potatoes, some of them jointed, two feet in length.

"Sir Walter Raleigh discovered potaters," said Walker. "Sir Tyrone O'Neill discovers yams. Try 'em. They ain't over and above mealy; they'd be better with butter an' pepper, but they ain't 'arf bad with salt."

He split open one of the bulbous roots disclosing reddish, waxy pulp.

"They'll have starch in them," said the professor. "I imagine we need that to offset our meat diet."

"An Irishman, potaters an' pigs go together. O'Neill found where the pigs 'ad been grubbing them up. Now we can dig those pits and get some pork. We ought to 'ave kept some of that hide for leather, guv'nor. My sneakers are beginnin' to go to pieces and 'ow you folks get along without any shoes is beyond me."

"We keep off the rocks," said Brett, addressed as "guv'nor" by the steward. "Pigskin would be hard for us to handle, I'm afraid. The shoe problem has got to be taken up. Sharkskin might work out if we could tan it. And soften it."

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"Who catches the sharks?" inquired Walker. "Not me."

The little jest got a laugh. Laughs were beginning to come more readily and they rounded off the corners of scarcity and drudgery. Wolf, gobbling, stuffing himself, remained apathetic. Hunkered down, where the others sat on rocks or logs, his long arms covered with hair, his matted chest and bearded face gave him the appearance of a great ape that had never achieved speech or laughter. But he worked well.

AFTER the meal Bowman and Brown hurried back to their dam; Tully took Walker off to the camp sites that he and Brett had thought possible. Brett walked over to the pile of wood that Malone and Wolf were assembling. The professor went down to the stream where he was trying his plaiting under water, as Panama hat-weaves are said to be made, and where he had some bark-string fibers soaking. O'Neill went with him.

Brett's mind was fixed on sandals. Until they could make some survey of the place he felt uneasy. To climb the crater was obviously the best method and to attempt to pass over the lava without some protection for foot soles was predetermined failure. He thought that he might—pending the manufacture of leather—utilize bark. He had sharpened three of the nails from the boat to chisel-edges on a stone—Walker had four more in use as hooks, the rest Brett reserved to use as awls.

There were many varieties of trees in the pile, more still scattered along flood edge. Above the waterfall he fancied there might even be a small jam. He examined the various barks, testing them with his chisel, trying to select one that would be tough and fairly elastic. The nails were clumsy tools, not long enough to give him a good grip, and he found difficulty in handling them until he thought of heating one and boring a hole in a bit of hardwood, using this as a socket in which to insert the head end of the nail, hammering it farther in with a stone and rewhetting. He was as proud of the result as a boy with his first pocket knife—prouder, with the glow of the inventor.

Now he could sample the bark with fair facility but the first real discovery he made was not in connection with his sandals. He cut into a soft tree-skin and found underneath inner layers that were white and papery, far more so than the stuff they had used the night before for kindling. Of the species of the tree he knew nothing but he was beginning to find his editorial reading coming into play.

Tapa cloth, he had read a score of times, in South Sea literature, was made from such inner bark, steeped and then pounded with a wooden club until it widened as it became thinner. Strips could be pounded together until the soft tissues welded. If this material could be so used the clothing question was partly disposed of, so far as covering and protection from insects and sunburn was concerned. He shouted to O'Neill and the actor came running.

Brett explained to him what he knew—or thought he knew—of the manufacture of tapa cloth and O'Neill, taking a chisel, set to work tearing off the outer bark and securing the papery strips for experimentation while Brett went on with his search for a leather substitute.

He found bark at last that looked as if it might do and managed to carve two sections into shapes an inch or two greater than the scratched outline of his foot. Using the rounded edge of a boulder he contrived to hammer the edges so that they turned up and found that the tough fibers held well together. He relieved O'Neill of the soft leather belt and cut most of it up into long narrow thongs with his nail-tool, returning O'Neill the remainder.

He bored clean holes through the bark with a heated nail and laced his thongs over his insteps and about his heels. He could walk without shuffling. He had made a good job of it though the sandals shifted a little. But the relief to his feet was great, he no longer had to pick his path gingerly. He trotted a short distance in his elation. How long the bark would last was doubtful, but the supply was pretty sure to be plentiful, the trouble of making up half a dozen pairs for a day's trip amounted to nothing.

He showed them to O'Neill and the professor. Malone came up to inspect them and even Wolf let out a grunt that tokened approval. They dropped their work and started in as shoemakers. There were eight thongs. One sufficed for each sandal. But the professor was confident he could weave together fiber string before sundown and they could always plait strips of cloth from their travesties of garments, now stained

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and torn almost beyond the utility point as to the pajamas. And Walker had the laces of his shoes. As yet the shoes themselves were better than sandals. Brett cut out an extra pair of soles for Tully and left for the camp site. O'Neill contracted to provide for Bowman and Brown. It was an eventful day of real achievement and progress, coupled with the inspiration of their own growing prowess.

The place they determined on for their house-building was on a grassy terrace well above the river, jutting out from the main escarpment of the cliff and set here and there with trees. Unable to find four as conveniently placed as their wishes had planned they finally discovered two with forking boughs about fifteen feet up and almost on the same level. And there were convenient rifts in the cliff, which would form the back wall of their tree-dwelling, into which the ends of cross poles might be thrust and plugged secure. The resulting frame would not be exactly rectangular but they were not particular and they could get a level floor.

Out of a larger cleft in the precipice a little stream was flowing. This ravine, fern set, was wide enough for exploration and Brett determined that the source of the water was from veins in the cliff and not the after seepage of the storm. It came out freely, clear and sparkling and its tiny course was well marked with smooth water-worn stones that established it as a fairly permanent supply.

As with Bowman and Brown, their main obstacle was the felling of trees. The uneven edges of the flint fragments promised a sorry exchange for ax or hatchet. The boughs of the trees uprooted by the flood might be burned off, Brett considered, if they could find enough of them the right shape. They left that difficulty for later, contenting themselves with choosing a place for their cooking, and for the latrine. Rapidly lengthening shadows sent them back to the cave where they found the rest already assembled and supper preparing.

The dam was nearly completed; they all had footgear of a sort; O'Neill produced some dried out stretches of papery cloth and Professor Harland exhibited several lengths of string, somewhat clumsily spliced but promising a supply of cordage with practise. It was a banner day.

THE sun sank behind the cliff, dark night fell like a curtain and they sat by their fire, tired but self congratulatory, united by common labor and success, laying out the next day's achievements. By universal consent the Exploration Committee was extended to the whole of the party. Fish, yams and berries were easy to procure. No one wanted to be left behind and it was a measure of safety for them to go together on a long trip. They might run across the beasts that howled in the night; there was still the possibility of natives.

"Are you too tired, professor," asked Malone, "to spin us some more of that yarn? I'm wanting to know what happened to them and unless I get something to make me forget the craving for a smoke I'll not sleep tonight."

"I shall be glad to do that." So, for an hour, Professor Harland recited the rhythmic lines he had translated and kept fresh in his memory for the love of their beauty and the stirring tale they told. It seemed almost as if he was setting forth their own adventure at times.

"Brightly sparkled the sea in the tremulous glory of moonlight.
Soon they were cautiously skirting the shores of the Island of Circe,
Where with unending song the Sun's luxurious daughter
Thrilled the desolate groves, and in her imperial palace
Conquered the darkness of night by the glare of sweet torches of cedar,
Flashing through daintiest warp the woof of her rhythmical shuttle.
Thence was plainly heard the furious growling of lions
Quarreling with their chains and filling the night with their roaring:
There, too, bears and bristly boars in strong-fenced enclosures
Grunted and snarled, and monstrous wolves were incessantly howling:
Whom by her potent herbs had Circe divine without mercy
Changed from the likeness of men to grim-visaged beasts of the forest."

Harland stopped to clear his throat and in the silence, far off, echoing against unseen cliffs, they heard the howling of the hunting pack starting out on their nightly raid. It was even more eery than before, safe though they were in the cave, coming pat as it did upon Vergil's colorful description. They sat hearkening with the same grisly feeling of ghost-hairs rising on their spines.

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"I'd like it better if they were in 'strong-fenced enclosures,'" said Bowman in a whisper. "First thing tomorrow I'm going to make me a club and a spear. Fits right in, don't it?"

"Barring the lady who played witch with 'em."

"That happened a long time ago, Malone," said Walker. "Go on, professor."

"Maybe it did," countered Malone. "But there's a lot of men haven't got over the spell yet. And I'd take the chance of it, at that, if she was good lookin'. 'Faith, I'd be willing to do a good deal to lay eyes on a pritty girl."

"I'm coming to one in a minute," said the professor dryly and went on to Lavinia, daughter of Latinus.

"Ripe already for love and dreaming already of marriage."

Lavinia, who was to bring about another Trojan war and the bloody rivalry of Æneas and Turnus. He stopped with the end of the seventh book, the gathering of the clans for war. They saw the kindling fires, they heard the brazen call of trumpets, they beheld the horsemen and the chariots, the champing steeds, the flashing armor, the tribesmen rallying for the fight. And, by the power of the dead poet and the force of language, they forgot the island, forgot their own plight and listened spellbound in a witchery as strong as that of Circe with her golden rod, a witchery that entered presently into their dreams.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PACK

THE professor awoke slightly feverish, threatened with an attack of what might develop into dysentery. He made no complaint beyond the fact that he would rather remain in the cave as he did not feel up to the exploration party, but Brett got him to declare his symptoms and felt the fevered head and hands with some alarm. His knowledge of medicines and sickness was slight. So was that of the rest. With Brett, practise was confined to the administration of ordinary well-known remedies found in every family medicine-chest or obtained at the corner drug-store. Walker, Brown and Tully knew how to apply first aid, if they had a kit.

Beyond doubt the woods harbored certain roots, herbs, barks, leaves, flowers and fruits that were sovereign remedies for many ailments; bone-sets, astringents, febrifuges, purgatives, stimulants, but, unless they could recognize any of them—and this was doubtful—their efficacy could only be determined by hazardous experiment.

It was a wonder, he reflected, that sickness had not appeared before among them after their exposures and unusual diet. It was a warning, the first showing of a fantom that would ever stalk them. More of Nature's attacking forces—Sickness—Pestilence.

Some sort of pharmacœpia they must establish as soon as possible. As it was, they could handle surgery better than medicine. During the hours of securing breakfast, preparation and eating and the manufacture of crude weapons—spears, clubs and daggers—with flints or stones bound on to wood by the fiber twine, the professor dozed intermittently while one or the other tried to reduce the fever with cold compresses made by soaking O'Neill's paper cloth. Brett diagnosed the attack as malaria, carried by the mosquitos. He foresaw that garbage and waste must be dealt with daily in the hot climate or they would be exposed to typhoid.

It was close to noon before they were in any shape to start. The professor insisted that he was much better and that the trip should not be put off on his account. His skin appeared moister and he had suffered no chills. He was able to sit up, though he did not care to eat. The pit-holes on the cave threshold, filled with water, would supply him. The cliff was in shadow for the rest of the day until the late afternoon and it would keep cool. Still Brett hesitated. Malone volunteered to stay, Tully suggested that, all being willing, they should draw lots in the matter but the protests of Harland grew so vigorous that they seemed likely to make him worse.

"You'll be back by sundown," he said. "I have fire and water and food if I need it. I'll sleep most of the time you are gone. I'm perfectly safe."

At the last moment Wolf balked on the trip. Malone, the only one with whom the Slovak would attempt to hold communication, reported that Wolf was bent on going fishing. Walker had had a monopoly of the

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sport and the oiler now demanded that he be allowed a chance.

"He's a stubborn cuss," said Malone. "But he can keep an eye on the cave and if he catches anything it won't come amiss. I'll tell him he's got to keep the fire going. He says he don't give a hoot for scenery. He don't want to know what the place looks like. All he wants is to get away from it." Walker turned over his tackle and they left Wolf, showing more apparent interest than he had since they landed, casting his line with the current.

It was a hot afternoon though they did not notice it at first, making their way through the dense forest that covered the crater's flank. The trees were much like Brett's California redwoods and the ground was covered with the mold of rusted needles, soft and pleasant going where they carried their sandals, lacing them on again as they emerged on a twist of lava flow that had drawn a sharp line of demarcation between trees and the volcanic desert.

This burned-out slag was brown and porous. It lay in long twists like rope, or like giant loops and coils of pulled candy. Bowman suggested it resembled the entrails of some antediluvian monsters. In it grew cactus now in flower, promising, later on, prickly pears. Also plants like Spanish bayonet, or soapweed, save that the long leaves were unthorned and covered with long silvery hair.

Farther up the slope they encountered fine cinders that gave way to a powdery black dirt, sulfur-yellow beneath the weathered surface. Then came more of the candy lava, badly broken up by explosions or by the weather. Now and then one of them broke through the treacherous crust and scraped a leg against the sharp rim of the hole. There was worse ahead, dark gray lava resembling obsidian that had cooled, it seemed, in the very waves of its flow. Some of these petrified billows were ten feet from valley to crest, sharply pitched. The bark sandals saved the feet but not the ankles.

Lack of vessels in which to carry water soon made itself painfully manifest as they labored over these difficulties, persevering, with Brett in the lead, none willing to call a halt until he did. Their flimsy clothes were saturated with sweat that oozed continually out of them like water through an unglazed crock. The ferns with which they had shaded head and neck wilted. The rocks refracted the heat that poured down on them, doubled it.

There was no wind. Between storms, the breeze seemed only to blow after sunset. They struggled past the flinty stuff and got to smoother ground, plastered by the taffy-like lava that had flowed at a higher temperature. They began to make good progress, drawing close to the top of the crater and the mouth of its shaft. The all-important question as to whether they were marooned on an island or whether, by some blessed chance, they were on the mainland after all, urged them feverishly on to the summit. Brett held a secondary curiosity to examine the crater for signs of activity, or sulfur they could use in making matches, but the anxiety regarding their situation was paramount. Hope ebbed and flowed like a tide.

They suddenly found their way barred by a deep crack, extending diagonally. Some masses of rock gave welcome shadow. For the first time they faced the view.

THEY were on an island.

There was no doubt of it. The little dominion lay plain beneath them, green with vegetation that was splotched by the up-thrust of barren cliffs, red and black. The stream ran through their home ravine like a silver ribbon. To their right—and the east—was thick forest. Beyond it there was what appeared to be marsh with a small lake gleaming and another stream that flowed east and south to an almost circular bay, nearly as large as the one where they had landed and which they could plainly see between two sharp horns of cliff, one of which formed the northern cape of the island. The eastern part, beyond the marsh, was pinched into a narrow neck leading to a headland formed by a second crater, only a little smaller than the one on which they stood. There was a long pocket of a bay across the neck from the one into which the swamp river flowed. Off its entrance was an island, a cone similar to Bird Island which lay north and west.

The sea lay like moiré ribbon of deep blue, stretching to an illimitable horizon, hopeless of speck of land or sail to their straining eyes. Their island was a tiny oasis in an ocean desert whose vast solitude numbed their souls.

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The line of the barrier reef was plainly marked by a line of grayish white and by the sharp change in color inside the coral where the water was jade-green mottled by purple where the shallows rose. They could see the reef opening off Bird Island and a wider one at the circular harbor to the south. The forest stretched around the base of the crater to the south and spurred out, margining the swamp. Other dark woods backed the northern cape.

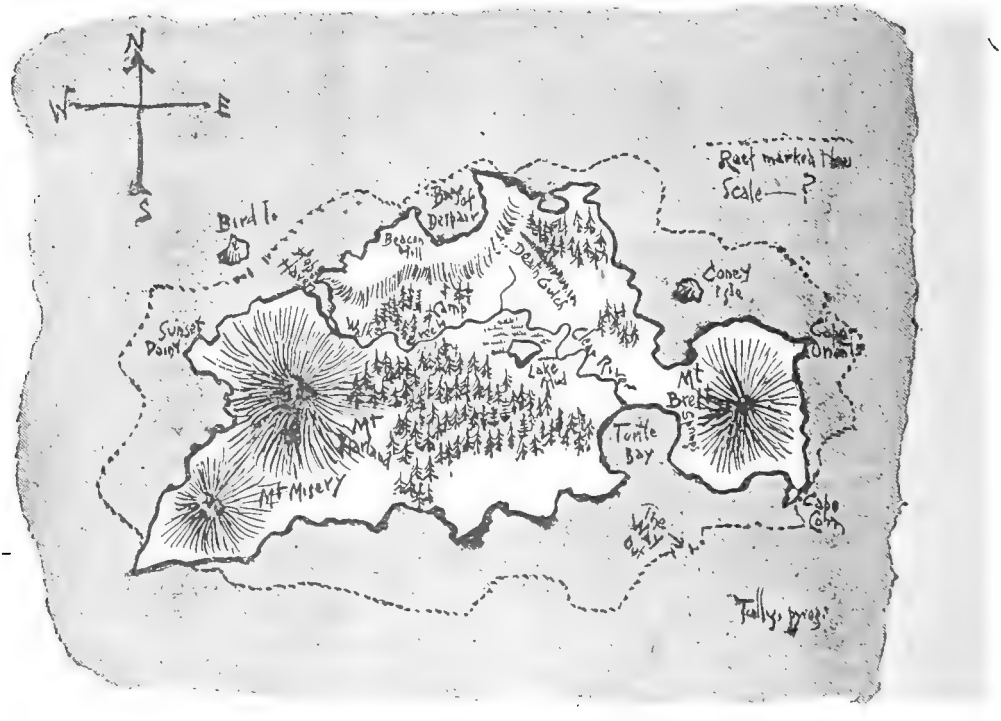
"Lonely enough," commented Bowman. "How d'you suppose we ever came to hit it?"

"If this is the top of some submerged mountain range or lost continent," said Brett, "I should imagine the bulk under water would create certain disturbances of the ocean that might cause currents that would bring anything coming within their influence toward the vortex—by which I mean the island. That sounds as vague as my knowledge of physics but it's a sort of theory. It doesn't make much difference. It is simpler and perhaps wiser to attribute it all to Providence. Here we are."

"And here we are likely to remain. Don't you think we ought to build a beacon here and have fire-making materials ready in case we sighted sail or smoke? A vessel might come this way. We ought to have a lookout, too. And another one on that cape to the north."

"Did you say you were going to haul up the wood?" asked Malone of Bowman.

"I'll do my share. Suppose a ship should come along and we never know it, nor they dream we were stranded here? My ——!" Bowman stood with clenched fists and staring eyes; his jaws clenched so that the muscles of his face bulged out. The rest shared his emotions variously.



"Is there any mortal way of calculating where we are, Brett?" demanded Tully. Brett shrugged his shoulders.

"I'll tell you what I have been able to figure out. Add to that the fact that we are on an island. We'll have to climb to the rim of the crater to be dead sure what lies south of us. I know something about sailing and I have dabbled with navigation. But we have no instruments. We can't fix our longitude, we have no means of knowing how far we are from the South American coast which is, I think, the nearest land,

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somewhere to the east. The noon shadow is very slight, which would place us down toward the Equator.

"At the North Pole the North Star is approximately overhead—ninety degrees above the horizon. Farther south you get, the lower in the heavens it shows. By guessing at its angle you might be able to guess about your latitude—somewhere near it. I don't know just where the curve of the earth—as you travel south—would shut off the view of the North Star and of the Dipper wheeling about it—but I haven't been able to locate either.

"Perhaps the North Star is below the horizon and that part of the constellation showing at this time of year is one I can't recognize. I don't, anyway. I don't know anything about the stars of the southern hemisphere. I don't know if I could pick out the Southern Cross—as we discussed the other night. We landed on the north of the island and so far I haven't noticed the southern sky at night. But I doubt if it would help any."

Walker was standing gazing seaward with his face twisted in the expression that was half question and half grin as if the matter of living was a humorous enigma. He whistled softly yet shrilly between his teeth.

It's a long way to Tipperary, it's a long way to go;
It's a long way to Tipperary, to the sweetest girl I know.

There are some songs to which the words are as familiar as the tune. Brett saw Tully's face working with emotion. Wallaby Brown had caught up a corner of his lower lip and his eyes were screwed close. Tully's eyes were frankly moist, and O'Neill's handsome face registered real tragedy.

Perhaps he had so much of the actor in him that he was forced to exaggerate dramatic moments in speech or action but, to Brett, who felt—with a passing wonderment, that he did not share their sensations—O'Neill's expressed sentiment was not all unreal. Malone, with the Irishman's susceptibility, responded to the marching lilt that came out of his own country, but his pose was defiant, his face cynical. Bowman had turned his back.

"For God's sake, Walker," cried O'Neill—"not that, man, not that!"

"Not what?" Walker's whistle had been subconsciously inspired.

"What you are whistling. Might as well be 'Home Sweet Home.'"

"Oh, might it? There was nothing sweet about my 'ome. But—" He gazed at the others and nodded comprehension. "I'm sorry."

"Home!" said Bowman. "How are we ever going to get there? To be penned up here for life, away from—everything. We can't wait for some ship to come along. It might never arrive. Life going on—over there—and we out of it." Here was the cry of youth for pleasure, for sex, for the sheer joy of living. It was tragic enough. "We've got to build a ship," he said.

"A ship!" laughed Malone. "A fine ship you'll be building when you can't even cut down a tree. I should think you'd had enough of ships for a while. I'm as strong for gettin' back as you are, Bowman, but I like to know where I am going and who's running things right. Would you tackle it on a raft? How about your grub? What'll you do, fill up on water before you start? Ship! ——!"

"It can be done. Can't it?" He appealed to Brett.

"It might. We've got to go a long way before we could build a ship. A plank is a problem without tools. We have no nails, no sail material, no facilities for carrying provisions. But it might be done. When Bligh, of the *Bounty*, was put into an open boat by the mutineers with eighteen of his crew who remained faithful, they had something less than a hundred and thirty pounds of bread, a few pieces of pork, a little rum and wine and less than thirty gallons of water. About five days, full rations. The boat was twenty-three feet long. They caught two small birds. They used rainwater. They were thirty days before landing on New Holland.

"They had to go on and, by this time, the only good watch they had stopped. They reached Timor, their destination, after a run of three-thousand-six-hundred and eighten miles in an open boat in forty-one days. Counting their landing at New Holland, they averaged a hundred miles a day. True, they had a quadrant and compass; they were expert mariners—most of them officers of the transport—but they were deep-laden and overcrowded. The boat was probably a good one.

"I don't think we can be anywhere near that distance from land. Bligh, in his

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narrative of the voyage from Tahiti to Timor, states that they passed constantly in sight of islands but dared not land upon them for fear of the natives. On the fifteenth day they went close to the New Hebrides. They were sailing west. We should go east. There are no islands likely to be east of us where, if there are inhabitants, they would not be friendly. What men have done others can do. The boat is our handicap. To make planks without a saw, to make a saw without metal, to fasten the planks together.

"If we are near the equator, according to the shadow, why don't we see more tropical growth?"

"We may find some yet, Tully, after we've explored a bit. I know it isn't very hot on the Galapagos Islands and they are right under the equator. I know that it is likely to be rainy weather on the equatorial belt most of the year. I know that the trees and plants on the Galapagos which are tropical are supposed to have been imported by man. The native growth is different from that of the nearest mainland, Ecuador, and they find giant tortoises there four to five feet long and weighing half a ton."

"There are no similar tortoises on the mainland nor any remains of them. The tortoises can float but they can't swim. Scientists claim they are evidence that the islands were once part of another continent. We may be on a similar formation. We are not on the Galapagos, for that is a group with the islands in plain sight of each other. I happen to know all this because a man who wrote a treasure story for a magazine I edited, placed his plot on the Galapagos, where he lived for a time. He came into the office and we had dinner together. He told me about his experiences and, at the time, I envied him."

"I'd like to find one of those 'arf a ton tortoises," said Walker. "The Lord Mayor 'ud 'ave nothing on us. The shell 'ud be prime for cooking. Some reptile, to furnish soup-meat and the pot to cook it in. Wot?'

"Say we were six hundred miles east of the Galapagos," insisted Bowman. "Say we sailed east and missed them. If we sailed right into the dawn we couldn't miss South America, could we? Then we could coast north to some port."

"First build the boat," said Brett. "The sort we could put together with the best of tools would have to depend on wind and we might run into calms lasting a week. We'd have to tack and sometimes we'd lose a lot of leeway with a head wind. I'm not trying to discourage you but we've got to go slow, it seems to me."

"Go slow!" cried O'Neill. "By the time I get back I may be an old man! You fellows may think it's a snap to star in the films but I've worked like a dog to get where I am."

"Think of the advertising you'll get," jeered Malone. "You'll be able to bill yourself as the Wild Man from Borneo. Take care of your beauty, O'Neill. It's losin' out with the girls that's worryin' you, I'm thinkin'."

"What if it is? I'm not the only one. I want to live. You might as well be an oyster growing on a tree root as stuck on this dump. I want to live, I tell you—not exist," he exclaimed passionately.

"I've got a wife and kids. They'll be thinking I'm dead by now," said Wallaby Brown slowly. "I suppose we'll be reported lost at sea. One of the other boats may have got in. They'll not be so badly off. I've made good money and I 'aven't chucked it all away. I kept up good insurance. But they'll be missing me like I'm missing them.

"You chaps ain't married, I take it—except the professor. It's just girls to you chaps—girls and a good time. It's wife to me—kiddies—a home. I'm going to make a stab at getting to 'em soon as I can, but I'm votin' with Mr. Brett. We got to go slow. We 'ad one taste of it in a small boat. Leave it to 'im and we'll 'ave a ship—some'ow."

"Meantime," said Walker, "while there ain't no use in dodging the fact we're up against it, there's no sense to grouching. The beacon's a good idea. We'll build it. Let's go on to the top of this dump-'eap and see w'ot we can see. Then go down where we can get a drink of water and do some more exploring while it's light. The blooming island ain't more than five miles by three."

THEY started for the final sharp climb. Brett, watching them, realized that the professor was not the only man attacked by sickness. They were feverish with nostalgia and it was a disease that would be constantly recurrent and ever gaining in strength. For himself he felt

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no special twinge of homesickness. The germ of adventure, so long dormant, was spreading through him. To fight against Nature in its own stronghold, to render it subservient, stimulated him. There were men born that way, he supposed, men with a touch of the viking, the pioneer, the hermit even.

He missed his books, certain congenial cronies, his pipe, music, theaters; but there were compensations. In him was welling up capacity to meet obstacles and conquer circumstance. He felt reserves of strength and confidence, an independence and a rising flood of health and optimism in his own resources, despite all their privations, that was new to him, that he accepted as an heir coming into his own kingdom. The little island, thrust up from the measureless sea, with all its pride of greenery, its grades of life, inspired him. It was a challenge! He was man, master of such things.

Some day this tiny dominion would be discovered, put to its ultimate uses, set down on the maps. Those who came would find that he had been there before them and, like a true frontiersman, had not neglected his opportunities. It was the mission of civilized man to carry civilization. It was not a prison in his eyes, a place to mope in and bewail fate if escape was not opportune. With the others it might well be different.

If they looked to him to devise a means of escape he would set his wits to that end, but he was not at all sure of the feasibility of ship-building. The risks of a voyage without compass or quadrant in such a green lumber craft as they could build would be enormous, but they did not affright him. He simply did not weigh them in the same proportions as the others who *wanted to live. This* was life!

It did not take long to go round the upper end of the crevasse and scramble up the lip of the actual crater, probably the final cauldron in which the eruption material that had gone to the island's making had boiled and overflowed. There was not much to look at. A pit with steeply sloping sides of cinders through which were thrust here and there projections of lava rock, gray and red and black.

Brett had expected a deeply exposed core, a vertical shaft reaching into the bowels of the heap, but it was choked a hundred feet down by a rubble of scoriæ where the chimney had fallen in upon itself after the fire had died.

He looked south. The land ran out to a sharp promontory, barren with slag, a subsidiary crater occupying most of it, a cone about a quarter of the size of the one on which they stood. Beyond—the sea. No land, nothing but blue, shimmering sea and blue sky with masses of pearly cumulus.

North they obtained a better view of the upper end of their home cañon, seeing clear over the spires of the forest. They could trace the source of their river and they saw now that the stream that ran south through the seeming swamp lands was a tributary of it, flowing down from a saddle of land.

East—Tully suddenly stiffened and pointed.

"Look! On the other side of the round bay. *Smoke!*"

They gazed breathless at the little column of vapor, blue white against the shadowed side of the far crater. It rose steadily from a mass of vegetation, close down by the water and plumed out until it faded mistily. Conjecture ran wild, concentrated in two possibilities. Another of the boats from the wreck had landed on the opposite side and the crew established themselves as they had done, unconscious of other existence. Or it was the fire of natives—presumably savage in this far off spot.

The first—hope backing it—seemed the more probable, as they discussed it. Their river was the larger. Surely they would have found traces of visitation, if not of habitation, by natives. And savages would surely have known of their landing and attempted—armed as they would be, curious as they would be—either to meet or attack them.

It was a surmise they did not dare to leave unproven. Friend or wild foe it was impossible to rest unsatisfied. They had weapons of a sort; they would go cautiously.

The thick forest covering the eastern side of the crater offered good cover. It reached down to the nearer margin of the bay where the smoke showed. Doubtless the more brilliant verdure, that looked comparatively flat from the height, would develop into trees and bush growth. Along the stream there were indications of loftier vegetation. Walker's estimate of distance seemed fair.

They had several hours of daylight and they had brought along some food. Water

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was the first consideration. They decided to travel down a fin-like ridge that would bring them to where the cañon curved and the river looped, with the cliffs receding and lessening. They could follow up the river to the tributary and continue along the eastern bank of the latter.

Two hours should make it, they agreed, though excitement discounted distance. They set out eagerly down the ridge into the shade of the forest. Among these conifers grew trees with more lacy foliage; the undergrowth was thicker and many creepers twined overhead so that the sun was shut out. There was a comforting lack of thorny growths and they made good progress, guessing the general direction by the trend of the shadows whenever a slight clearing gave them opportunity of observation. Birds of brilliant plumage flew overhead—ring-doves and small parrots in blue and crimson, cooing and chattering.

They came across a trail, hard trodden, narrow, leading downward toward the river which they could now glimpse occasionally. Along this they proceeded cautiously. It might have been made by man or by beasts, none of them was woodsman enough to determine that in the absence of clear signs until they came to a fern-circled pool, cool and clear. The soil was clayey and at one place imprinted with hoof-marks, evidently those of wild hogs.

There was a second, shallower spring where they had wallowed. The clear water indicated that it had not recently been disturbed but they stopped to listen before they drank, trying to see through the brush, seeing nothing, hearing nothing, to their relief. A wild boar, resenting intrusion, would not be a pleasant customer to meet, a herd would rout them, tusks against spears and clubs, possibly tree them for hours. Brett knew that there were kinds of swine indigenous to America, from Arkansas southward. These might be the same peccaries. Original inhabitants of this nubbin of a vanished continent.

Their thirst quenched, they pushed on refreshed, resolving to return to this trail and make pitfalls in it and about the spring as well as in the clearing where O'Neill had discovered the uprooted yams. Those yams Brett resolved to cultivate.

The forest thinned out; the conifers gave way to many varieties of trees. For the first time fan palms showed, dwarf palmettos rather, since they grew only as ground shrubbery. The fibrous leaves of this gave promise of the most likely material so far discovered for twine and rope making, for hats, baskets and fans. Tully discovered some pale golden globes gleaming among glossy leaves. Forcing his way through the tangle he came back triumphantly bearing two great shaddocks that weighed nearly ten pounds apiece, so far as they could guess.

"Some grapefruits!" he cried jubilantly. They opened up one of them and found the pulp crimson, slightly acid, delicious, though the partitions were bitter as quinin. Malone was less fortunate. Spying a bush laden with fruit in the shape of small oblong cylinders, growing in pairs, scarlet in color, he sampled, cautiously enough, and spat out furiously. It was a pepper allied to tabasco, if not actually that plant.

One other welcome find they made as they emerged from the trees into guava scrub, fighting their way through the jungle of it but picking the pink and white pulped fruit and eating it avidly. They reached the marshlands, thick set with tall reeds and great masses of lavender and white iris. The ground was moist, soggy but not so much as to appear dangerous. Their feet sank slightly into the spongy soil but it seemed as if the lake they had seen from the crater drained most of the superfluous water. There were occasional mounds, grass grown. From one of these they caught the gleam of the bay they were bound for and, on the far shore, the steady thread of smoke that plumed out and faded into mist.

They were well into the swamp before they noticed that their guess as to the thoroughness of the lake drainage was not a good one. Little runnels of water began to appear more and more frequently, showing abruptly among the reeds that were shoulder high. Most of these sloughs they leaped, others they were forced to wade and found the bottom treacherous. The mire was soft and they began to slosh through it ankle deep, then halfway to the calf, with more and more difficulty of extrication. Feet came clear with a sucking noise and the feeling of a broken grip that plucked steadily at every stride.

Mosquitoes—they had not noticed any on the crater or in the woods, even at the spring—hummed and burred about them more

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and more thickly as if they were assembling from all over the morass. They fanned at them with the palmettos they had torn up but the insects were persistent and soon so thick that they appeared like black clouds, stinging every portion of exposed skin, lancing through the thin clothing. The bites swelled rapidly showing white blisters on the sun-scorched skin. The places itched intolerably before they began to burn. The increasing irritation sank deeper than the skin, their blood seemed to boil, their bodies to be afire with fever.

The worst danger that threatened was blindness. A few more stings on the eyelids would leave them plunging, staggering through the mire, lost to all direction, floundering, falling into sloughs or pools, exhausted at last, not to arise. It was a very real peril.

WALLABY BROWN, blundering on with his face protected by hands and crossed forearms, broke through first to the lake, stumbling, pitching forward on all fours into the water while, with a whirring roar of swiftly driven pinions, up rose a flock of ducks, squawking in protest, mounting, wheeling, forming into V companies under their leaders and rocketing away. They were too persecuted for the time to see the irony of this sudden disclosure of a food supply that was beyond any efforts of theirs to secure. All waded deep into the lake and ducked under its surface to get rid of their persistent enemies, waiting for them to come up again.

Brett caught inspiration from a glimpse of Brown, pawing at his tortured face with his hands that were thickly coated with the slime of the lake's bottom.

"Mud's better than clothes," he said. "It'll dry on us like armor." They were swift to grasp the hope and waded out again, stripping themselves and daubing their bodies thick with the sticky stuff, plastering on the ooze, regardless of its odors, smearing it from where the hair ended over face and neck and ears down to the soles of their feet. Parts of their clothing they made turbans of, rolling up their pajamas until they were merely loin-cloths.

The mud relieved the pain almost instantly. It baffled the mosquitoes. It restored their equanimity so that they were able to roar at the ludicrous appearance they cut, dripping ooze and slime as they started for a second coating of security. It dried swiftly in the sun rays, now beginning to slant from the westward, dried like an unwholesome rind.

"Some war-paint," cried Walker. "Like Hepps' Cocoa, grateful and comforting. Hey! Come 'ere—careful as you go. Look at that!"

The original Crusoe, staring at the footprint in the sand, was not thrown into greater consternation than they as they crowded together, held back by Walker's extended arm from destroying the trace he had found. There in the mud was a big splay-footed track, heel and toes and even the bridging flat instep where the moist dirt had received it. Ahead of that perfect slot was the mark of a knee, the depression of the deeper imbedded toes and sole of the mating foot. Here a barbarian had evidently gone down on one knee and scooped up the lake water for a drink. So the runes read to the group of white men, checked in their mirth, reduced to whispers, looking fearfully about them.

Judging by the size of the track, the savage was a man as large as any of them. Even now he might be ambushed in the reeds, drawing a poisoned arrow to its head or setting a tiny venomed dart within a blowpipe.

Imagination never runs riot more wildly, more alarmingly, than in the bush or jungles of a savage land whose inhabitants are unknown. The air was charged with menace, the wind whispering through the water-grasses seemed the rustle of a gathering foe. Fear gripped all of them, their rude weapons seemed useless as toys. Their brains, with the reins of emotions cast loose by the shocked wills, stampeded to thoughts of torture, stake and fire, the death-ovens of cannibals! Then they rallied.

"They are not about," said Brett, his voice, pitched low, filled with relief. "The ducks flew from us. They would not have been settled down if any one was near."

"Unless they were lying mighty low, waiting for a shot at them," said Tully, shattering security.

"It isn't one of our own tracks?" asked O'Neill.

"No one's been here but me," declared Walker. "It ain't mine. I've got on my sneakers and that 'oof's twice my size. Here's my trail. And I was all alone. We'd better get out of here."

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"You're right," said Brett crisply. The combination of the savage spoor and the smoke column filled him with a premonition of dread. He wanted to get back to the cave. Time had flown while they splashed through the swamp, the sun was getting perilously low and they could not tell how soon they might be able to work their way back to the highlands. Apprehension for the professor assailed him. Reluctant as he was to return without solving the question of the smoke, it seemed, in the face of things, a dangerous thing to attempt that night, dangerous to stay away from their own base after dark. There was the hunting pack, the boars and now—tribesmen. A thought struck him.

"It couldn't be Wolf?"

"He was going to take the raft and fish down-stream," said Malone. "What would he be wandering off here by himself for when he told me he didn't want to go away from camp? He was crazy to fish."

Brett turned away, the flimsy hope dissolved. Remembering the lay of the land as they had surveyed it from the crater he struck out toward the saddle of land that had appeared as the source and watershed of the two streams. From there they could follow the ravine to camp or keep along the high cliffs if the going was better. No one mentioned the professor, but it was evident that they were all keen to return. Their plastered faces showed no expression; but their eyes, curiously, comically plain, stared out of the masks anxiously.

The dried mud served them well though the mosquitos sought every crack in the armor. Occasionally they renewed the coating as they went along, floundering through the swamp that seemed to have reserved its worst perils for their homeward trip. Walker sank to his waist in a quickmire and Brett went as deep trying to haul him out. They formed a chain and achieved a rescue after great effort, forced to make a long detour about the treacherous strip. Its farther margin proved quaking and spongy. Every step was to the knees for a while, draining them of their strength.

They won free at last, gaining a slope where guavas grew. These they gathered and ate while they rested a short time, limited by the threat of the shadows. The umbra of the crater was flung over the eastern half of the island; the sun was hidden behind its rim. Night was coming swiftly, the final rush imminent. It grew perceptibly cooler on the edge of the morass. Filled with the pulp, refreshed a little, they picked up their weapons and hurried on through the fringe of the forest. Where the sky showed, it flamed with sunset and afterglow that quickly faded. They came out of the woods above the cañon and, in the last twilight, made their way toward its cliffs.

Every moment they had dreaded to hear a yell, the patter of rushing feet, the whirr of arrows—or—worse—to see some of them fall stricken by an unsensed foe, smitten from ambush, pricked by a deadly dart puffed from bush or bough. The atmosphere was charged with a presentiment of evil, for themselves on the home trail, and for Harland and Wolf, surprized at the cave and along the river.

They crossed a bare stretch to the margin of the ravine at a half run. Here, if ever, as they broke cover, they would be attacked. The sweat of reaction broke out on them as they found themselves unmolested. They must have passed unseen, the prints must have been those of a lone warrior. Yet he might have warned the tribe who would, savage fashion—as they imagined it—hold a pow-wow and a war-dance before they gave battle to the white invaders.

The moon rolled up from behind the eastern cone as they halted for a moment to get their wind and decided upon the best course. The cliffs were from fifty to a hundred feet high and precipitous, offering no immediate and easy chance of descent to the bed of the cañon where the river ran in a rocky trough. Trees grew in clumps on the margin, with strips of tall grass and coverts of shrubbery. Hundreds of uprooted trees were stranded here and there. The evening wind drew up the ravine like a draft up a chimney. It brought the sound of the waterfall, beyond that, faintly, the drumming of the surf. And——

They became rigid, standing like stone figures, listening.

FROM across the cañon where the cliffs were broken down into slopes and terraces and the forest mounted steadily to the seaward precipices, there came the swelling uproar of the pack—louder and closer—a brutish blend of howl and bay—eager, defiant of concealment, knowing the cry of the hunt carried terror to all living things, striking in to jellying

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marrow, robbing fleet limbs of speed, paralyzing instinct and destroying cunning.

It expanded to a vicious, blood curdling howl, then died to a silence yet more terrible. The mind's eye beheld the ravening brutes coming on, fleet to follow the scent they had struck, with jaws slavering in anticipation as the nostrils widened to the pungent particles that betrayed their victims. Heads pressed close to the dirt the better to enjoy the odor, or flung up in bestial delight of the chase that would end in the slashing, clawing, rending kill, the lapping of hot blood, the gulping of quivering flesh.

They shrank down close to the ground, grasping their weapons. Atop the steep cliffs they were immune. Intent upon the warm trail they were following it was improbable that the pack would sight them; the wind precluded discovery from smell.

The moon soared up, full and brilliant, unclouded, strong enough to hold much of the color of the ground and trees.

There was one solo howl—questing, anxious. Another. Then full cry again as the fault was bridged. The next instant the pack broke into view, going so swiftly across a slope that they were merely a close running blur of great brutes disappearing into a draw. They were silent now, save for an occasional quivering whimper of impatience. The five men squatted tense, waiting for them to cross a stretch of rock at the foot of the draw.

They came racing out into the moonlight straight on to the river and broke up into groups, individuals, roaming swiftly here and there, turning sharply, nosing the ground. One or two lapped at the water. One great beast sat back on its haunches, lifted its nose and howled. With the pose the sound became instantly translatable, the identity of the creatures revealed. They were hounds, enormous dogs, larger than Great Danes, short-furred, lop-eared, long of limb and of their whip-stock tails. Baffled wails broke out as they followed the example of their leader, making the night hideous with their clamor. In the clear light Brett caught the gleam of teeth. He fancied he could see the lolling tongues in the dripping jaws.

The leader crouched and sprang, magnificent, clean-leaping as a cougar, bounding across to a rock that stemmed the current, a clear jump of close to a score of feet. For a moment he stood with head up and one paw raised, frozen, sniffing with wrinkled muzzle.

Nothing came to him on the wind. He was soon satisfied that the quarry had not doubled—gone down stream. Without hesitation he jumped into the pool, that was too wide for further leaping, swimming across swiftly, chest well out, shaking himself as he came out with a brilliant dazzle of the drops that flew from his body in the moonlight. He began to run about, casting for renewed scent.

It was intelligent but not marvelously so. Pigs would be expected to cross directly to the far side of a stream; they would not swim it. The wonder was that pigs crossed water that was so deep and swift. Animals in a wild state do many things the tamed varieties have forgotten about. A further surprise was the fact that the rest of the pack stayed across the river. Some of them even lay down, content to know their leader was at work.

They were formidable looking brutes. Brett surmised that their presence proved the previous dwelling, or landing, of white men. But one could not be sure. No one was quite sure from whence the dog had originally sprung. Wild wolf, coyote, dingo, dholo, jackal, fox? Long-haired all these, with plumed tails. The island pack was short of hair, suiting the climate.

The first dog likely crossed the line between freedom and domestication with the first of the camp-fires, creeping in, urged by a strange tug to become friend and ally of this two-legged, upright walking god who could make flame. If wild dogs were tamed, so these, even if they were actually a primitive species, might be brought into camp, made comrades instead of enemies. It would seem good to have a dog or two about, Brett thought, and then necessity smiled grimly and whispered that they needed the hides for sandals, for clothing, for lashings and all uses of leather. Also they were a long, long way from being tamed; they would not be easy to conquer, even in a battle to the death.

The leader had found the scent again and he gave instant tongue that was taken up by the orchestra of the pack, leaping exultantly before they plunged into the water, one or two, more clumsily emulating the leap of their chief to the rock. Twenty-three of them, Brett counted, as they clove

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the stream with their powerful muscles, each swimming in independent course, emerging, shaking, finding the ground scent, forming into pack and then off up the ravine, closely running, side by side, silent again for the while, tails waving stiffly; the leader in front, nose to earth, muzzle swaying a little as he raced. They were lost in shadow, seen for a moment again in light and then they rounded a bend in the cañon. Their diabolical cry sounded as if the trail had yielded up a special burst of effluvium. Then they were gone, utterly.

"Hate to have that bunch after me, with no trees in sight," said Bowman.

"It would be a battle royal between them and wild boars—if the number was equal." This from Tully.

"Dogs take care of that. They hunt in a pack by instinct. And they do all the hunting. And we thought they were lions and were going to rig up a deadfall! You'll not catch those chaps that way. They wouldn't climb out along a log to reach the bait," said Bowman.

"We'll 'ave to look out for our larder. We'll 'ave trouble with those beggars," said Walker. " 'Spose they are dorgs but they're bigger'n any ruddy mastiff I ever saw. Bigger'n Shetland ponies. Travel fast, don't they?"

A sound like a medley of hunting horns, blown very far away, came faintly to them against the wind. Its note changed.

"Made their kill," said Brett. "Wonder what keeps their numbers down and why they haven't killed off all the pigs?"

"Dog eat dog," suggested Malone.

They had come to a cutway in the cliff, leading down to the ravine. This they negotiated and passed swiftly along to the waterfall, though the way was made devious by rock masses and the jumble of stranded timber.

Brett gazed axiously up-slope toward the cave. That side of the cañon was in darkness, unillumined by the moon. The fire should have showed ruddily and cheerfully as a lighted window. But there was no sign of it.

The apprehension he had felt swelled into certainty. Disaster of some sort had happened the moment they had left in force. The professor—Wolf—were they murdered or had they been carried off for savage deviltry?

His own blood tingled at the way his comrades went up the slope without hesitation. So some of them had topped the trenches. It warmed him to feel that he was unafraid though he did not stay for analysis of his emotion. Vengeace was the main factor of that. Professor Harland, old enough to be the father of many of them, weak and sick but game through and through, lying there mutilated, or——?

THE cavern gaped like a silent, tongueless mouth. Its roof reflected a feeble glow from an almost dead fire. There was a lot of wood on the floor and Brett, first across the threshold, tossed some of the smaller boughs on the fire with some bits of bark that flared up, revealing the prostrate figure of Professor Harland, lying, not on the ferns, but on the bare dirt, his scanty gray hair catching the light, arms outflung, ominously still.

Brett kneeled beside him, running his hands over him. There was no blood, the limp body seemed whole enough. He caught a faint pulsing at the wrist, a suggestion of a heart-beat. Some one had got the fire roaring. Malone was beside Brett with an improvised torch.

"Sure he ain't hurt," he said. "They must have clubbed him. Say, look at his throat." On the withered neck, bronzed with exposure, the marks of clutching fingers were plain in purple bruises.

"I'd like to get at the one who did that," growled Malone. "I'd twist his neck off." There was a note in his voice that made Brett glance at him curiously, a note of regret born of real affection hallowing his rage. "What I can't make out," he went on, "is why they didn't——." He broke off short. Brett had taken a wetted bit of bark cloth from Tully, and Bowman had brought more water in his palms. They chafed his wrists, bathed face and neck, tried to get some water between the jaws, clenched as tightly as a sprung trap.

"Wasn't natives did this," announced Malone suddenly. "Some one's turned his pockets inside out. Your money's gone, Brett. It was Wolf turned this trick, blast him! I ought to have seen he wasn't comin' out of his trance like he used to. He's gone plumb, stark crazy. And he's scragged the prof for the dough."

"What good would it do 'im?" asked Brown.

"Not a bit. I tell you he was crazy. Me

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too, big a fool as he is. He wanted me to run off with him and do in all of you. He got the idea in his head that this was *his* island. Bolshevik stuff. Brett here was tryin' to be a Czar. We was to kill all of you, get the money. That's how I knew he'd gone off his nut, acting as if the money was any good. But I thought he'd come round and I let him rave.

"Now he's done in the prof and I'll get him or chase him into the sea for the sharks. We *got* to get him or he'll sure raise —— with us. Lucky he can't buy bombs with that money. He's a crazy Bolshevik—worse than any of 'em, because he's madder. And he had to pick the prof becos he had the money. I'll mend his brains before morning. I'll spatter 'em, scramble 'em."

He broke off into a long string of virulent invective, foul, rudimentary, forecastle and fire-room blasphemy qualified by the evident grief back of it that was the bellows blowing up his determination for revenge.

"You can't get him tonight, Malone," said Brett. "Besides, the dogs may have been after him. They may have got him. They might you. That was his footprint by the lake, his fire smoke across the bay. There are no savages here after all. Wolf took fire with him from this one. He could have carried tinder and kept it going easily enough. He was cunning enough for that."

"Then he must have tackled the professor soon after we left to get that far. Premeditated the whole thing," said Tully. "I hope the dogs were after him."

"He wasn't afraid of the dogs," said Malone. "Not even when he thought they were lions. He thought he was king of the whole ruddy castle. And he made a sucker out of me. I——"

A sigh came from the professor and they increased their efforts, rubbing ankles as well as wrists, applying friction to his soles and palms. Brett raised his head and shoulders on his knees. The sick man swallowed a little water, choked, swallowed some more and opened his eyes. He tried to speak but only made strange clucking noises.

"You take it easy," said Brett. "You'll soon be all right now. It was Wolf who did it?" Harland nodded weakly and closed his eyes again. They put him on fern litter closer to the fire. He began to breathe naturally; pulse and heart resumed almost normal action. Ease of mind from knowing himself surrounded by friends contributed toward the sleep that claimed him as the rest sat round the fire and ate, discussing Wolf.

That he must not be allowed at large they soon determined. If he was mad and therefore not responsible, nevertheless he must be prevented from committing irresponsible acts though he might not be really guilty of crime or deserving of punishment. The arguments flamed hot concerning penalty.

"What are you goin' to do with him, then?" demanded Malone. "Keep him tied up? Feed him like a kid in a high chair? I've seen his kind go bad before—from stoke-room heat. Brain goes rotten like spoiled fruit. Maggots in it. Thinks he owns the island and he'll take every chance he gets to kill us off. One at a time if he can't do any better. Either you bump him off or you keep him caged up. If you don't you might as well commit suicide. He'll get you sooner or later. It's up to me. I ought to have tumbled to him. He did his best to murder the prof. My fault. All right. I'll even it up—and I'll bring back the money. Not that it's much good now but it might be some day, at that."

"We've got to give him the chance of getting his wits back," said Brett. "Even if we have to confine him."

"You never brought a nut back to his senses by tying him up," demurred Malone. "I suppose you'll vote me down, as usual, but you'll be sorry for it. He chokes the prof and you're going to slap him on the wrist and say 'naughty.' Give him a soft snap of no work and plenty of grub and, if he ever breaks loose, he'll bash in the back of your head with a rock."

"I didn't know the professor was such a special friend of yours, Malone," said O'Neill. "I wonder whether you'd have been as anxious to get Wolf if it had been one of the rest of us?"

"You've said it yourself. No. Why the prof? Because he's the salt of the earth. Chuck-full of education and don't think himself a bit better than the other guy. Talks to me man to man, all the same I was his own brother. The rest of you are almighty condescending but you think yourselves a cut above Malone the Boiler-Feeder.

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"The prof is gamer than the whole bunch of you and he's the same every second of the twenty-four hours. He's like first-class linoleum, is the prof. The pattern lasts all the way through till the stuff's worn out. If he croaks I'll see the Slovak pays for it, vote or no vote. You can hold your ballot and to —— with you!"

He left the group and went to the front of the cave. It was a curious twist for Malone, the affection he held for the professor against his ultra socialistic principles as applied toward the rest of them. That he blamed himself entirely for the happening was plain. He had known Wolf far better than any of them. But he had not been able to judge the sudden atavism, the result of the successive shocks that had upset Wolf's mental balance, never very sure, and thrust him into brutedom.

Wolf could fend for himself now that he had fire. Whether he could protect himself against the hunting pack, the boars, the hazards of the island life, was a question. How far he might injure them was another. The debate ended with a resolve to attempt to secure him, to render him the best possible treatment, starting for that purpose the next day, leaving half their number at the cave. The place where they had seen the smoke was to be their objective. This was not unanimous. Walker, O'Neill and Brown were for leaving him to his own fate, provided the professor was not seriously injured. If Harland should happen to die, they believed that Wolf should be put out of the way.

"E's a murderer, any way you look at it," pronounced Walker. "And a mad murderer is just that much worse than a sane one, to my mind. We've got to look out for ourselves. An eye for an eye, a life for a life, I say. But I said I'd go with the majority and I do. I'm telling you one thing, and that is I'm jolly well glad that was Wolf's 'oof-mark and 'is smoke. I've been seeing cannibals all night. We've got troubles enough outside of that."

They all subscribed to that, with certain reservations. It was not positive that Wolf had made footprint or fire. Tomorrow's exploration should clear up that. While they were hunting Wolf they would cover the island and determine whether there were others who claimed ownership. Doubt on that point meant persistent unrest by day and night.

CHAPTER IX

MAN HUNTING

MALONE was gone the next morning before any of the others awakened. He had taken with him some cold food and the special weapon he had made from a jagged fragment of flint, bound into a cleft stick with vines. Wolf had made himself a similar one.

For a few moments they debated a question propounded by O'Neill. Was Malone genuine in his denunciation of Wolf? Had he not gone off to join him after all? They decided in the negative.

"Malone hates better than he likes," said Brett. "He would not have faked his feeling for Professor Harland."

"I don't know about that," countered O'Neill. "He admitted he was practically plotting with Wolf. Wolf may have gone off half-cocked and Malone taken the position he did so as to get a chance to sneak off and join him."

"In which case we are liable to find it out before the day's over," said Tully. "Who's going to form the home guard?"

They split their forces, three and three. Brett, Wallaby Brown and Tully to the trail. Walker, Bowman and O'Neill to stay behind, to watch over the professor and to provide food and wood.

Brett determined to avoid the swamp as much as possible. The big crater and the one back of it, except for the portion of the first covered with forest, did not need reexploration on account of their barren, waterless slopes. He led the way over the back trail of the night before up to the place where they had watched the pack cross the river and then continued up the cañon along the top of the ever lessening cliffs. The cañon became a wide and shallow valley covered with long, slippery grasses, treeless. Through this they trudged in single file. There were no mosquitoes.

They reached a saddle of land, more or less rocky, with clumps of trees like cedars, distorted by the wind, the home stream flowing in a narrow channel through the plateau with occasional willows on the banks. More willows marching off at right angles and to the south seemed to mark the course of the stream they sought. This proved to be true and they traveled at good speed through fairly open country,

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gradually descending, the circular harbor in plain view and the column of smoke still ascending. Malone presumably was ahead of them though he might have chosen a different route. He would likely make for the smoke, whether going to join Wolf or to attack him.

In turn this smaller stream entered a valley but the character of the country was different from the northern side of the island. Brett fancied it was in the lee of the prevailing winds. It was less rocky; no cliffs appeared. The swamp lay to their right, but the water, if it drained the morass, ran through solid soil. There were guavas for a while, then brush palms that merged into groves of shaddocks, giving place to broad-leafed shade trees with smooth-barked trunks, interlaced with creepers bearing flowers whose strong perfumes hung heavy on the air. It looked as if they might do better to select this side of their dominion for a home.

The chance that one of the boats might have landed and the survivors caused the smoke still lingered in their minds and they talked of it when they halted for a brief rest. But it was a slim one and none of them placed much confidence in it. When they marched it was in silence.

The valley commenced to descend toward sea level in a series of terraces, the stream cascading down. The coniferous forest on the eastern slope of the main crater began to invade this territory, closing in to the bay that now opened full to their view, the little river entering it fairly in the center of its curve. The undergrowth was generous, extending out from the trees, close to the margin of the stream. Much of it was high enough to conceal their progress.

They came to a knoll topped by a few tall evergreens and climbed it for a final observation. The sun poured down from a cloudless sky, there were only sounds of birds and the murmur of the cascades, the place seemed a virgin solitude. From the height they could see the entire beach of the natural harbor.

There was no sign of any boat or canoe, no sign of habitation but the smoke going up from the verdure at the foot of the crater that made up the entire eastern promontory, as they had viewed it from the island's highest point. There was no sign of Wolf, or of Malone. Small, stilt-legged birds like plover were stalking along the beach margin, sometimes wheeling in small flocks with plaintive cries but landing again.

"You'd think Wolf would mask his smoke," said Tully. "He must know we'd be after him."

Brett was thinking that and he nodded.

"He should, if cunning and madness go together," he assented. "Somehow that smoke doesn't look quite natural to me. Or too natural. The amount never varies. A man would have to be feeding it all the time. The closer we get the more it looks like steam to me. See the way it plumes out."

"A hot spring at the foot of the crater?"

"I'd place a bet on it if we had anything to wager. We'll soon see."

Within half an hour they reached the source of the smoke. The vegetation, made up largely of enormous ferns, ceased abruptly and they broke through to an oval depression at the foot of a wall of the taffy-like lava that had once poured over a cliff from a plainly marked flow extending to the rim of the crater. In the center of the hollow were rocks, piled up like a cairn, partly covered with lichens. From the middle of the pile vapor streamed up as if through a chimney. The air was moist and warm, there was a distinct smell and flavor of sulfur. Small rocks and pebbles covered with a yellow-white deposit marked where some overflow drained into the porous ground. On one side of the rocks they found a slightly steaming pool, scummy, malodorous.

"Rotten eggs," said Wallaby Brown, "is lavender beside it."

"It might help to cure Professor Harland. It's a laxative. It would make him sweat out his fever. The Indians in California built wicker sweat-houses over springs like that. Now they house them at health resorts."

"Cure him?" Brown looked at Brett with a wry face. "I wouldn't touch that stuff if it cured hams!"

The three of them laughed in a mingling of relief and disappointment. If Wolf was not here, nor any survivors from the wreck, neither were there any savages.

"Vote we move over here," said Tully. "Better view, better harbor. Sandy beach. No mangroves, no mosquitoes, no ——"

"No oysters."

"There might be turtles. Fishing ought to be good. Better entrance through that reef when we build our ship. That steam

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coming up through the rocks isn't sulfurous. I tried some of it where it had filled up a hollow. Spray from the jet, I mean. It tasted kind of flat, like warm water out of a rusty dipper. I bet it's good medicine. We could boil our grub, take warm baths."

Tully was rapidly becoming enthusiastic. Brett saw still other advantages. For the moment Wolf faded into the background. The soil on this side of the island was indisputably richer, with plenty of level surfaces. It could be irrigated. Brett was not a practical agriculturist but every Californian knows something of the theory of irrigation.

A vision of crops and plantations persisted with him, obscuring the thought of escape that seemed paramount with the rest of them. To transplant the best of the fruits, the edible shrubs and roots, and improve them—the ducks in the lake swamp had been feeding on wild rice, as Brett knew from his cruising and shooting days about the Sacramento sloughs. It all rose in his mind's eye, enticing. It was as attractive to him as the chance of a big job of puddle engineering is to a small boy, plus the man's enlarged capacities and recognition of utilities.

Brett had been pretty well shut in most of his life, he was beginning to realize. Civilized man might ultimately come to a diet of nitrogenous tablets, concentrated fats and sugars produced in factories under the superintendence of expert chemists, while the tilling of fields, the planting of orchards and vineyards, the tending of sheep and cattle vanished. But that was a long way off.

Man still was close to the soil. The majority of men were agriculturists, not one man in every thousand who did not long to dig earth, smell it, see things grow, if only in a back-lot garden. Part of the curse of Adam, Brett reflected smilingly, a curse that was also a beneficence. This was his first opportunity.

"The stream's smaller. There's 'ardly any driftwood round 'ere. If we cut wood you've got to float it across the bay. And 'ow about our fish-weir we've been breaking our backs over?"

Brown's objections broke in on Brett's musing.

"We can settle the moving question later," he suggested. "There's no sign of Wolf in this direction. Maybe Malone's had better luck. We might go round by the beach to see if there are any tracks and strike back home through the forest. I'm not keen to tackle the swamp. I don't imagine Wolf will elect to make that his headquarters. If he does I'd be inclined to leave him to the mercy of the mosquitoes."

The beach was pleasant walking. For much of their day's marching they had been able to dispense with the makeshift clumsy sandals. They fancied their feet were gradually hardening. Certainly the mud plasters of the day before, remnants of which still clung to them, had had a healing influence. The sea was shallow, sparkling and tempting and they took an invigorating bath in the shore surf. The bottom was the finest of coral grit with myriads of shells ground into infinitesimal fragments of iridescence. While they were still in the water Tully excitedly pointed out a moving object on the beach, a rounded, perambulating shell that was unmistakably a turtle. They splashed out at top speed but the reptile was too swift for them, scuttling fast on its flippers and gaining the water before they could cut it off.

"Been laying eggs," Brown suggested. They followed the trail of the flippers and lost it in long trails of beach-vines.

"In the stories," said Brett, "in *all* the stories, the shipwrecked hero turns up the round, leathery-skinned eggs with unfailing precision and saves the life of the heroine and all the ship's company. It is easy to do it in print and on the film. As first-class castaways we are a failure. And if that turtle laid eggs round here she is a first-class sexton."

"Maybe it wasn't that kind of a turtle," Tully put in. "Anyway, there are turtles here and they do land on this beach. That's worth knowing.

"Seems to me I've read they only come out egg-laying at midnight, by moonlight. But we can make a watch-party and wait till one waddles out. Then we sprint out, lightly take the beast by the hind-nigh and the off-fore flipper *à la* Zybysco, give a dexterous twist—and there is Ma Turtle with her shoulders to the mat—as it were. Previously we have spotted where she deposited her eggs. Results—omelet for breakfast, soup for lunch, steak for dinner, calipash and calipee. A fine turtle-shell for a soup tureen, a washbowl, or beautiful tortoise-shell combs. Tortoise-shell tooth-picks out of the trimmings. *Voilà!*"

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The nonsense carried off their chagrin. They ate cold fish and yams instead of the elusive eggs and finished circling the bay to a point opposite the smoke that had caused them such anxieties. Here the forest touched the lagoon. The thickets were so dense that they had to scout about to find an entrance that would not have to be won by an ax. Brett discovered the beaten trail, narrow, flattened by generations of hoofs and foot-pads of dogs and pigs.

It was doubtless made by the latter to reach the beach where they would find food along the margins, dead fish, occasional crabs, starfish—anything to relieve the monotony of yams. They might even enjoy a sea wallow. The dogs might like a sea swim, though Brett imagined they used the trail for grimmer purposes.

It was invitingly cool within.

AT FIRST the trees grew somewhat sparsely and the noon sun broke through in brilliant, dazzling pools of glare. But there was plenty of shade for the most part. For a while the trail skirted the forest, following the general contour of the land. Doves cooed and parrots chattered. They walked cautiously but at a good clip, ears alert, eyes glancing everywhere, their weapons tightly clutched.

Suddenly a flock of parrots came screaming down the green aisle, flying low, swerving off and up at sight of the three men, squawking angrily. Brett was in the lead. Brown and Tully ranged as close to him as the width of the path would allow and they advanced with slow wariness to discover what had disturbed the parrots.

The trail turned at a sharp tangent, rounding the buttresses of a great tree, its lower boughs curtained with creepers. They peered through this green screen and saw a man come limping down the path, clutching at the tree trunks for support, his head sunk low between his shoulders, groaning in evident pain. He stopped, leaning against a pole. He looked anxiously behind him, then sighted in front, shading his eyes against a sun spot.

It was Malone, weaponless, discomfited, injured. Brett called to him, then stepped out in plain sight, followed by the other two. Malone croaked a greeting—then—as they came up—

"Where can I get water, for the love of God!"

Tully gave him a couple of guavas he had been saving and Malone bit deep into the pulp. He was in sorry shape. His singlet was ripped clear of all selvage and one leg of his worn, stained dungarees was torn away close to his crotch. There was blood on one shoulder and his hair was matted with it. His left arm hung limp.

"Found Wolf?" asked Brown.

Malone spat out the rind of his guavas.

"Found him? Blast him, he found me! I was coming through the woods, making for the bay and the smoke and I was keeping my eyes peeled and not makin' any noise. The trees thin out a way back and I'd seen the blue water. All of a sudden I runs across a spring, like the one we saw yesterday. All marked up with pig-hoofs and dog feet. That wasn't all. It warn't quite clear, as if something had been drinking not long before. That made me extra careful and I'll tell you eyes and ears fair sprouted all over me when I see two foot-prints—same as we see at the lake. Identical. Then more of 'em—two or three. All comin' *to* the spring—none goin'. That puzzled me for a jiffy. Like a —— fool I never thought to look *up*. Then there was a —— of a racket of birds and I see, right there in the pool, Wolf, up in the boughs like a big gorilla. See his teeth and the whites of his eyes plain as if they was white pebbles at the bottom. He was grinning at me.

"He may have been friendly, savvy? He may have figured I'd come out to join him, like he's proposed, seein' I was alone. If I'd thought, I'd have jollied him along till I got a even chance with him. But I showed I was sore, and I was surprized an' so I sings out to him,

" 'Come down out of that, you ruddy murderer!' He comes, all right. His grin changed quick and he flings that club of his. It catches me on the top of my head and prit' nigh puts me out. The Wolf drops out of the tree and we're at it. He's got all the best of me from the start. I go down with his weight atop of me and I twist my arm under me. I get in one wallop, with my club, and he roars like a bull. Say, he's stronger than six ordinary men. You can't hurt him.

"He come down astride my shoulders to begin with and then he grabs my good arm with his two hands and scraps for my club. I won't let go and he can't make me, but he can break the handle—and he does. The

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rest is a whirl—all over the ground an' into the pool—with me fighting for life. That clip on the head had put me on the bum and I warn't gettin' any stronger. Wolf gets hold of my ankles and gives me the leg-split. I thought he'd tear 'em apart. And hurt?

"I'm no squealer but there ain't a man alive that can stand that. It finished me. I flop, with him chokin' the breath out of me. Like a wild beast he was, snappin' his teeth. I thought he'd tear the flesh off me. Why he didn't finish me is by me. Maybe he thought he had. But, when I see light again, he's gone, up in his trees most likely. I get up but I can hardly walk. I'm through fighting for the day, or man huntin'. So I start down for the sea, half dizzy. I wasn't out long. The pool's still all muddy an' bloody when I leave it. Mebbe it's clear now an' I sure need a drink. Holy Saint Patrick, what I'd give for a real drink!"

The man-handling he had gone through had almost destroyed his locomotion, but his obstinate pride insisted that he could walk without help. He did accept a spear from Brown who had both that and his club, and he used this as a staff, walking between Tully and Brown, who was the rear-guard.

They came to the spring, now fairly clear, and saw the trampled margin. To the best of their recollection the footprints that did not match Malone's, and were therefore Wolf's, duplicated those seen at the lake, which were pretty well printed in their minds. It seemed finally to dispose of the question of savages. There had evidently been a furious fight. Handicapped as he was, Malone had put up a good argument.

They all drank and they got Malone in as good shape as possible. The blow on the back of his head had been only a glancing one, causing a scalp wound and a terrific headache. The oiler complained but little. Trudging along as they struck deeper into the woods, traveling north and east toward the home cañon, their search extended to the boughs.

It appeared now that Wolf had not brought fire along with him but it was probable that while his wits had been, in one sense, dulled, in other ways they might be keen enough and he had seen the process of flint and stone. His tree progression might be a precaution against the dogs that might have been on his trail the night before, or a complete lapse, a reversion toward original type.

Malone had to stop occasionally, trying his best to smother a groan. Wallaby Brown looked him over with professional interest.

"Look 'ere, Malone," he said. "You'd better let us make a litter and carry you. You've been strained bad with that split-hold. You might 'ave got a rupture. What you want to do is to take it easy."

"I suppose you think you could have licked him one-handed," sneered Malone. His face was gray and haggard under its bristles, his eyes sunken in dark pits.

"Not a bit of it, pal. I bet you put up one —— of a good scrap! But 'e got you foul. You take my advice——"

"I don't want it, nor your help either. From none of you," yapped Malone, forcing himself to stride on, stiff-legged, his good arm clinging to the spear. Brown shrugged his shoulders. He winked at Brett, which the latter interpreted as a prophecy that Malone would not last much longer on his own feet.

They entered a glade where a rocky outcrop made the soil too shallow for tree growth. The trees that circled it had dark, glossy leaves and were heavy with nuts, many of which were on the ground from ripeness or windfall. They seemed not unlike chestnuts; encased in a thick rind more like that of the walnut, the meat was sweet though hard and very oily. But the enormous number of crushed outer shells showed that the wild pigs made this a favorite feeding ground, munching the mast, ejecting the bitter rinds.

Crossing this Malone suddenly collapsed. Tully stayed with him while Brett and Brown tugged and hacked at such saplings as they could find and handle, managing to make a wobbly litter. It took time. After they started off again their progress, carrying Malone, who stayed unconscious, was slow. It was growing dark before they were out of the woods. Occasional rays, rapidly nearing the horizontal, showed them their direction and that they were working out of the trees toward the cañon at last. The litter was not easy to carry, Malone was heavy. They took turns at relieving each other, setting down their burden for the change.

The rest—or the uneven joggling—brought Malone back to his senses at one of these halts and he promptly sat up, cursing. Brett's patience chafed through.

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"Look here, Malone," he said. "We're not carrying you exactly because we love you, any more than you do us. Nor for any expected gratitude. But—if we hadn't done it, my son, and left you where you played out—the pigs would have had meat for supper tonight—or the dogs a change of diet. Unless your pal Wolf had forestalled them to make an end of you. We're not looking for any thanks. Nevertheless you owe us something for toting you for the past hour or so and you can pay it back by common decency."

Malone glared at Brett but found no reply. He got to his feet stiffly. At that instant a wild boar trotted out and stood gazing at them, his upcurving tusks showing, his wicked little eyes gleaming redly. His snout was far longer than that of an ordinary pig, one shaggy ear was missing. His bristly shoulders were wide and powerful and he tapered off behind with a symmetry that spoke for great speed and agility. He stood there snuffing at them, making up his mind, challenging the right of way. When he turned his head a tusk showed up a foot or over in length, curving backward like a saber.

He displayed absolutely no fear. He grunted and another appeared, standing beside him. One was black and the other dirty white. The bristles on their backs commenced to rise; they lowered their heads and tossed them, beginning to champ their jaws and fleck them with foam while their tasseled tails switched ominously. To turn back was disaster. To advance seemed hazardous. Brett and Brown held their ground in the trail with their spears lowered, ready for a charge. Both boars grunted in unison and the woods suddenly echoed with a score of answers from both sides. The eyes of the two champions of vested rights literally blazed with fury as they rushed with wild fury and incredible speed to clear the trail.

There were trees available with boughs that they could reach by a little speedy agility in climbing. But Malone was incapable of it. Brett rapped out an imperative order to Tully over his shoulder.

"Boost him up. We'll hold 'em."

He was conscious of Malone on Tully's shoulders, scrambling for refuge. Then the white boar was upon him, Brown taking the black in its charge. Brett's flinthead struck the boar in its shoulder, it grated against bone, glanced off along the thick tough hide and entered its flank. There it held against the hip, while the boar squealed and twisted and strove to rip him with its tusks. The spear shaft bent but did not break. Only the determined effort of the brute to reach and maim its opponent kept the unbarbed flint in place. Back of the boars the trail was close packed with other pigs, crowding like maggots, snorting and grunting. More were striving to break through the undergrowth. It was an affair of seconds before they would be javelined by the tusks. Malone was in the crotch of a tree, Tully still on the ground, trying to find place for a weapon thrust.

Brown's spear, taken back when Malone was carried, had pierced the chest of his boar and the shaft had snapped under the frenzied wrenching. His home-made war-club swung up and came down to shatter the brute's skull. It dropped and the smell of its blood seemed to send the rest frantic.

"Jump!" he yelled as he side-swiped at Brett's boar, smashing it over the one good ear and toppling it. "They're all over us."

BRETT leaped, caught the bough above them and, as he had not done for many years, since his old gymnasium days, swung his legs up, in between his arms, knees across the branch that commenced to sway under his weight and that of Brown. He brought up sitting, breathless, a little uncertain how he had managed.

Brown was grinning beside him. The fighter had swung up sidewise, clasping the branch with arms and legs and wriggling into position astride. Tully was safe with Malone. Beneath them the herd of pigs was milling, rooting at their dead and wounded, gazing up vindictively at the trees, trampling a circle about them, grunting as they patrolled.

"We are in for it," said Brett. "Stuck here till they make up their minds to quit. Can you make out to hang on, Malone? It'll likely be a long siege?" Malone deigned no reply but Tully announced that their seat, masked from Brown and Brett, was comfortable. Brett started to edge along the bough toward the main trunk.

It was too pendulous for his liking and their feet were none too high above the pigs. It creaked ominously once as he inched in and Brown sagged downward, hauling up his knees and riding the bark like a jockey on

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a horse's withers. They both made the trip in safety and found wider, securer perches.

The light failed. Dusk deepened to night. They sat in the darkness knowing that the pigs still kept revengeful vigil by the patter of their hoofs, occasional grunts, and—once—for several minutes, a crunching noise that told of their method of disposal of their dead, a sound that was at once menace and warning. From time to time they called out to each other. Malone and Tully had found creepers on their tree and had cradled themselves into more security.

The blackness yielded slowly to dusk again. Motes and flecks of light made their way through the tangle of boughs. They began to distinguish the forms of their inexorable patrol, to see glints from vigilant, vindictive eyes. A beam of moonlight fought down and through, broken but persistent. Others followed, shifting their angles slowly as the moon rose.

Far off, as it had commenced the night before, they heard the clarion of the pack rising and falling, dying away. It came again but from the opposite direction, an echo, another pack or the first, circling on the trail. Silence again and uneasy grunting from the pigs—a consultation perhaps, if their shallow brains could hatch more than one idea.

Again—and again—louder and louder. Two packs. If they were hunting in unison—the idea occurred to the treed quartet simultaneously—they were closing in on the herd, either by direct scent or because this runway was also a hunting trail. There was little wind in the forest, the pungent scent might have scattered.

Round and round in their circle the pigs trotted, stopping every now and then to lift their shaggy ears and grunt, to shake their heads and lift their snouts toward the men they had trapped and were determined to reach. The dogs were silent but it was certain they were near at hand. They could see the wide nostrils of the pigs working as they snuffed. They ceased their circling, gathering in a compact mass, the sows in the center, the boars facing both ways down and up trail. They were trapped in their turn.

As at a signal, the woods reverberated with yelps and deep-throated barks. Green, lambent eyes showed before the leaping shapes came hurdling over and through the moonbeams, fangs gleaming as they dashed for the defiant swine. The boars confronted them. The issue joined in a maelstrom of action that was accompanied by a deafening uproar. Tusks shone as they slashed and ripped. The great body of one hound was fairly tossed in a somersault, landing among the sows that made short work of it, biting and devouring in fury rather than hunger.

But the pack—the packs—were organized. Certain dogs acted as holders, clamping their jaws on the ears of the harassed boars, holding on and anchoring with their weight while others sought for throats or sank their teeth into the softer hindquarters. The mantle of bristles on the tuskers' massive shoulders protected them, but at last a boar would be tripped, flung on side or back and instantly the entrails would be ripped out. It was a bloody, sickening affair to scent and sight and hearing. The dagger-like tusks tore through hide and muscle, the cruel fangs slashed and tore in the mad *mêlée*.

The herd broke at last, leaving their dead and the mangled carcasses of three of the dogs. Some of the hounds remained to devour the hogs, the rest, with unsated blood lust, streamed off after the squealing sows and grunting boars, now in full retreat. The feast below did not last long. The dogs who had filled their stomachs did not follow their fellows but trotted off down the trail. The four men clung to their boughs, shaken by the spectacle, unnerved. The pack had taken no notice of them.

All sounds died away. They waited until the moon lifted several degrees and then they got down to the sodden, trampled ground where the three hounds lay—what was left of them. Malone was able to move—his litter was not to be found and he professed himself restored. In silence they fearfully reached the edge of the forest and crossed open ground to the edge of the cañon close by the waterfall.

Up the ravine they heard a cry—a human note—a clan call. Walker and Bowman searching for them—cooeeing through the night. They answered and waited till they saw the pair coming anxiously up, carrying flaming torches. O'Neill was with the professor, who was much better, both of his bruises and the fever, but alarmed. A fire was burning brightly in the cave-mouth as they stumbled up the slope to find food waiting for them—food and safety and the welcome beds of fern.

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CHAPTER X

WAYS AND MEANS

MALONE was too stiff to move the next day. He lay prone on the ferns. The professor, rapidly convalescing, was the only one against whom he seemed to have no grudge. To continue searching for Wolf seemed to the rest of them waste of time for the present. He could fend for himself and he could easily elude pursuit in the forest. Malone's objection that they would not know what to do with him gathered weight. He would probably be only captured after a desperate fight in which some of them might well be injured unless they could surprize him.

Meanwhile he might come back to his senses, return to camp. Professor Harland held no grudge against him, considering him beside himself. The money was a small item. It was not likely he had destroyed it since he reckoned it a prize. It was a useless thing in their circumstances. And there was much to be done. The cave was an unhealthful place and inconvenient. Brett wanted to push forward the building of a regular dwelling; the others were intent upon their experiments and inventions. The general health and comfort of the community demanded first attention. If they ran across Wolf or he interfered with them it would be different. The majority did not hold the tolerance for him that the professor displayed.

Bowman had thought out improvements on his weir. Instead of the straight line of stakes, he constructed with Brown two curving pounds, one larger than the other. The stone dam acted as a leader to the entrance to the larger pound, splitting the opening. There was a by-pass into the smaller pound around an angling wall that left a five-foot ingress.

The fish, entering along the dam, either up-stream or down, naturally followed the curving wall of the bigger pound, through the by-pass into the smaller and finally into a shallow pocket about ten feet long and sixteen wide, with sides of netting stretched on a frame and a floor of wicker. The walls were made fish-tight by brush woven in and out of the stakes.

The professor solved the netting question. He discovered one day how to lay the twine, setting one strand on his knee and twisting the next about it with a rolling motion of his palm. So with the third ply, overlapping cleverly to preserve the strength of the continuous string. These three plies were in turn manufactured into rope, the lay being left-handed as opposed to a right-hand lay in the twine. Malone helped with the cordage while his strained tendons got in shape.

The weir was a success. It was an automatic fish-trap. After tide-turn all that had to be done was to bail out the shallow pocket with a hand net and bring back the catch. It offended Walker's sporting blood. He made himself hooks out of shell, bait and barb in one. A curving piece of shell for spoon, a carven hook of pearl, rubbed down on stone, tied to the shining concavity.

With this, trolling on a pole, he made good catches for his own pleasure and relaxation. But he was not above devising a shrimp net out of O'Neill's bark-cloth stretched on a frame attached to a pole. Shoving this scraper along the sands at low tide Walker caught many a mess of the savory hoppers.

With his cloth O'Neill had trouble that experience overcame. He experimented with various bark linings and finally turned out wide sheets of the papery stuff. Its texture was slightly scratchy to the skin at first. Needles and thread such as they could evolve did not work well with it. O'Neill tested out glue made from fishskin and bones to join seams, but it was not satisfactory. At last they compromised on using the stuff as skirts and mantles. Their skins hardened as they bronzed. The paper cloth was good fair-weather material.

Tully, with his pots, seemed to have tackled the hardest proposition. Baked in the sun they cracked, they would not glaze, they fell apart with boiling water or a stew. He managed to achieve some bricks of the clay mixed with chopped tree fiber and dried grass. These furnished a kiln built about a stone slab supported on two rocks.

Under this he piled charcoal; on top he arranged his clay productions. Tully got the same lesson out of his pottery as the others did with their tasks, that failures were steps to success. Experiments taught him to arrange his drafts so that the charcoal would furnish the right temperature, to set his pots mouth down, to sprinkle salt so that its fumes made the glaze. The first triumph came with mixing sand with his clay.

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His shapes were cause for laughter at first, misshapen crocks scooped out of a lump of clay, saucers clumsily modeled by hand. The professor suggested a potter's wheel, turned by hand and, after a week of fussing, Tully evolved one, got the hang of it and began to deliver what he proudly termed art-ceramics.

Walker was chef and purveyor. He spent hours making bows and arrows and trying to secure good aim and penetration. The ducks on the lake were his inspiration for this weapon making. The fiber string was too elastic, the wood for the bow insufficiently so. Walker's bows were good for amusement but not much more, to his good-natured chagrin. He tried a sling, he tried boomerangs and came to the decision, with the rest who practised with his implements of chase and war, that, with primitive weapons, the main effectiveness lies in the skill of the handler, and that baffled them for many weeks.

Brett tackled the ax problem as the one that seemed to him most imperative to solve. Their attempts at felling trees would have been mocked at by an aged beaver with toothache in its incisors. Once down, they could split the saplings with wedges, get off the bark by soaking and setting them before a fire. But he wanted to get beams and planks, flat surfaces for frames and flooring. Brown built a wickiup for curing pork and they got all the pigs they wanted by pitfalls near wild yam patches.

But Brett wanted a house. The question of moving across the island was settled by a gradual dropping of the subject. It never came to open argument. There was a certain sentiment attaching to the place where they had first built a fire that appealed to all of them. And the selected site was a good one.

Brett turned surface geologist. He found flat stones in the stream that suggested to him axheads, plowshares and hoes, with a little ingenuity of fastening to shaft and pole and crooked bough. He got several prizes by diving into the pool below the waterfall. Many were fortuitously shaped. As hoes and plows and even spades they were quite satisfactory but he was not ready for agriculture and the best of his stones had an edge that hacked rather than cut and, with the harder woods he coveted, merely bruised.

He discovered one day a stone of close texture, roughly circular. He floated it to camp and painfully and tediously chipped away a hole for an axle. He sculped the circumference to truer dimensions. He built a crude cradle and made a handle. Though they were still in the stone age—nowhere could they find trace of malleable metal, even of definite ore—he had stretched its limits. He had a grindstone. Axes and knives of shell or stone or bone could be kept sharp enough to be really tools, not aggravating substitutes.

He made fairly smooth surfaces now with his lumber by charring and then scraping, chiseling and adzing. He bored holes with his precious nails and pegged his timbers together. The house grew, wicker walls from the willows on the watershed, daubed with clay, O'Neill's finest bark cloth for windows until the time they substituted tortoise-shell.

Long grass furnished the thatch, bundled and bound to the cross-poles of the rafters. They built a fireplace and a chimney of stones mortared with pounded coral lime and sand, a hearthstone of a slab. This was for cooking and comfort on rainy days and cool nights, also for light. When it was nearly finished, they moved in, considering it a marvel of architectural design and builders' skill. It had many defects but it was habitable. They could have built it over again immediately and wonderfully improved it, but it was their own home; it was waterproof and windproof; it was warm with a fire and cool without one. A ladder reached to it from the ground.

In the narrow crack of the cliff where the spring rose they established their larder for spare food, finding a shallow cave that they believed out of the reach of the dogs. Food spoiled rapidly at that season. Throughout the day there was a good deal of heat, though one day in three brought some rainfall, and hardly a day passed that was not partially cloudly. Every little while there would be a smart downpour and such nights would be really cold. If there was a rainy season to come they foresaw the need of warmer clothing than O'Neill's output.

To supplement the pottery they used shells and some calabash gourds discovered by Malone. He continued cranky after he was on his legs again. When he could not have the company of the professor he stayed alone, a chip always on his shoulder, holding fast to some resolution that the others

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looked down upon him, whereas he knew—and the professor knew—that he was as good a man as any, if not better. When Brett and O'Neill started swimming lessons after the house was built, Malone would not join the class but watched them and applied what he learned in private. Eventually he swam as well as any of them.

With the stress of early labors they did not miss amusements. There was more than enough to do and sunset saw them glad to eat their supper and turn in to be up with the dawn. But when the work began to slacken Brett saw the necessity of something to fill in. With leisure, joshing was likely to slide unperceived into wrangling. They were often at a loss for subjects of discussion. After Professor Harland finished his Æneid and other translations of the classics stored in his memory, O'Neill came to the rescue with stories—somewhat vainglorious—of the film studios. The others opened out, little by little, but too soon all yarns became twice-told and then twenty-times stale.

The swimming helped. They devised other sports and games, making quoits out of shells, throwing at a mark, practising with the bows and arrows. They organized trips to hunt out Wolf, but though they found traces of him here and there they never sighted him nor did he bother them. Some of these signs were the remains of raw fish and roots. He had no fire.

It was the sleepless hours after dark that palled. Professor Harland suggested checkers and they pyrographed a board and played with black and white flat stones for men. Tully, who had some talent in that direction, drew a map of the island on bark with a hotpoint made of a nail. Naming the various points was one pastime. Tully insisted on titling the chart as THE ISLE OF NOWHERE and in time it fairly bristled with more or less apt nomenclature.

In many trips Walker managed to shoot three ducks and the professor made pens from their largest quills. Walker contributed the inkbag of a small cuttle fish, only to find the fluid insoluble in water. The sediment, however, made a sort of cake and, by treating it with the lye water from wood-ashes used in their soap-making they produced ink. But they had to discard the pens. They scratched the fine bark-paper and even the bark linings and the ink blotted.

Brushes were manufactured from chewed twigs and from feather tips. The professor started on a fresh rendition of his precious Vergil and Brett kept a diary. The water-clock they contrived finally with one of Tully's cylinder jars; the sundial, with all their attempts, proved uncertain and irregular.

Out of the logs, hollowed by charring and their stone tools, they made two dugout canoes, outrigged, furnished first with paddles, then with mast and lateen sails of matting or, for light breezes and fine weather, bark-cloth. Rain saturated the latter and they soon discarded it. Walker chose the shaping of the two canoes as his special job and displayed considerable ingenuity. He chiseled away stem and stern, he added a prow and built up gunwales of uneven planking, fastened by pegs. The little craft sailed fast on the wind but it was long before they overcame leeway and could beat to windward.

They found other edible fruits from time to time, notably that of a passion-flower vine, acidulous and refreshing. Substitutes for tobacco were hard to discover. They either lacked in flavor, burned the tongue or would not burn at all in the pipes they made of hollowed roots, with stems of rushes or pithy slender twigs with the centers pushed out.

Time dragged for most of them. It was braked by the thought of Home. The inadequacy of a substitute heightened nostalgia by comparison with the real article. After a while they ceased to mention such things, but they brooded, with the exception of Professor Harland, working at his hexameters, and Brett.

BRETT reveled in the life, in every difficulty overcome. His muscles developed, he became able to work long hours without fatigue; his appetite was astounding and his digestion excellent. The physical side of him came into its own and, with it, the desire for labor and keen joy of achievement.

They started an attempt at a boat, chopping out a keel and posts for stem and stern. The ribs were a harder job and despite all their efforts they botched them. Most of the available wood was green, it warped and split. The skeleton was asymmetrical despite their best pains. It took days to hack and scrape out a plank. At last they gave it up in despair and burned the

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travesty. Disputes, quarrels and contradictions became more frequent while Malone, sometimes covertly, sometimes openly, sneered at Brett's endeavors to promote mutual interests and entertainment. Even Brown's good-nature languished to moodiness. A day of rain brought melancholy; sunshine failed to restore normality. Walker's whistle failed; jocularity vanished; a laugh was almost a forgotten thing.

Brett had found life as he had never known it. The others had lost life as they had imagined it. Malone's influence began to assert itself. Tully and Bowman began to listen to his vulgarities. Sex instincts worked in them unhealthily. Their moral senses dulled.

They often heard the cry of the pack but they lacked incentive to try to secure their hides for leather. When it was cold they hugged the fire.

Brett broached the subject of plantations of rice-fields and yam cultivation but gained no response.

"What's the use?" asked Tully. "We get along as well as one can in this —— hole."

"We can improve the quality. We don't know how the weather will act after a while. It may rain for weeks on end. We should put up stores. We ought to look to the future. We've got to face the fact that we may never get away from here."

"You seem to be reconciled to it."

"I am, Bowman. That isn't quite true. I like it."

"You needn't be so ruddy smug about it," cut in Malone. And talk languished. Brett blamed himself, unjustly, for the growing apathy, the breaking down of moral fibers and of civilization where he had thought to upbuild. If he had those qualities of leadership he had fancied he felt in him, surely he could devise some means of making the best of things, of knitting them together. He did not realize the strength of his opponent—Homesickness, fed by Memory, augmented by natural instincts and longings.

He took counsel with Professor Harland, with Walker.

"They are younger than we are," said the professor. "Tully, Bowman and O'Neill are only boys. Brown is married. Malone has led a rough life and he has acquired habits and appetites that are hard to down. It is only natural they should be restive. The beacon has been a big disappointment."

The beacon had been built, not on the crater but on the cliff summit back of the house, a narrow trail made to it so that one might rush up with a flaming torch at the first sight of a ship. In all fine weather some one always remembered to watch beside the beacon. Hope died hard and left aching scars of disappointment. There were so many hours of night, of storm and rain, when some ship might have marked the horizon!

Walker hit the nail on the head.

"Plain 'omesick. Seen it in the war. Known a man to 'urt 'imself—not becos 'e was afraid but becos 'e wanted to go 'ome for a spell. Brown's worrying about his missus and the kids. W'y not? I would if I 'ad 'em. O'Neill used to be a big toad in a puddle. He misses all that. Lord, I bet 'e was fed on kisses and girl mush. Tully an' Bowman, they want girls and dances—'strolling down a shady lane with 'er 'and in mine.' They can't stop thinkin' about it. They ain't monks. Nor me either, for that.

"I'm a bit fed up on it all myself. It looks like a clean washout and I like my bit of fun. Malone's a roughneck. Most of all 'e misses 'is booze. 'E's been tryin' to make some. Tully and Bowman 'ave sampled it. O'Neill's got no use for Malone. Won't talk to 'im. They've tried guavas and grapefruit and yams, but there ain't enough sugar in the stuff. It ferments a bit but it makes 'em sick. I took one swig. Enough for me. 'E's workin' on berries now. Some day 'e'll strike the combination and there'll be ructions. We ought to start another boat."

"We can't build a boat, Wal er. Not a plank one. We'd have to steam the planks and wooden pegs would draw. Look at the best planks we've made. And those ribs. We've no compass."

"Those chaps are nigh ready to take a chance on a raft, Brett. You try and figger out some sort of a boat. It'll help keep their pecker up. Something may break before it's finished."

Brett thought hard and worked hard to design one. He knew something of sailing. He spent long hours on the lagoon with the best dugout, changing the rig. He found that by using boom and gaff, a club jib and a tiny lateen mizzen he could work to windward. He knew that South Sea islanders had made long voyages successfully in their

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native craft. It was surely within the scope of a white man to do the same. But those islanders had handed down lore of stars and of currents, they could take easily acquired stores of coconuts, yam paste and dried fish. For himself he was content. So was the professor. The latter had spoken once about his daughter.

"They grow away from us, our children," he said. "They make their own nest, their own lives. We become but shadows to them. She has mourned for me but she has her fill of compensations. I used to think," he went on, "that children were one's patent of immortality. I have changed my mind. It is what a man does, what he creates and hands down to posterity. It stands for itself. Nothing is wasted."

"Your Æneid?"

"I trust so. It may survive. I have published one edition. Who knows? The children of Cæsar are forgotten dust, but the songs of Omar the Tentmaker will live. What you have done here, on this island, Brett, what you will yet do, will not be wasted. Effort is power translated. It may change shape and form; it never is lost."

Brett began to see a dim possibility of a seaworthy craft. It seemed to him that most of them stood midway between the danger of decadence and the perils of the sea. Perhaps the last chance was the best. Some diversion was a vital necessity.

Then Brown came rushing in from their platform veranda.

"The dogs have smelled out the hams and stuff," he cried. "There's a pack of 'em at the larder. The devils have jumped up on each other and clawed up into the cave. Come on!"

They grabbed weapons and torches and raced out. They cornered the dogs in the cleft before the brutes noticed them. A brand or two flung in maddened them. Instead of fleeing they charged in deadly earnest, singling out individuals, employing the tactics they used on the hogs. Spear thrusts failed to stop them, clubs stunned one or two but they slashed with their teeth, trying for a grip, they scored with their claws and Tully went down with his forearm in a beast's jaws to defend his throat. Brett and Brown leaped in, battering with club and ax.

A dog sprang for Brown's neck. The fighter's hand shot out and he gripped the brute by its own throat, swinging it clear of the ground while it clawed at him. Brett, swinging his ax, killed the one that had Tully's arm, spattering the latter with blood, helping him to rise. He saw Brown toss aside the dead body of his hound, fairly choked, and bend to find his weapon. A slavering beast seized his leg and again Brett's weapon crushed home.

Malone was fighting with fire, dashing the flaring wood into open jaws that snapped at it but retreated. But they were all too exposed with their tender skins to risk an open fight. The thought of hydrophobia flashed through Brett's mind as he shouted to them to make for the ladder and the house.

Some one threw a torch. It caught in the drying ferns and a line of fire ran across the opening and spread suddenly. It was too much for the pack. Terror struck them, remembrance of forest fires when they had been forced to race for their lives. They turned tail and fled leaving their victors to extinguish the flames as soon as the last of the raiders disappeared. Tully had gone to the house to treat his arm, Brown with him, lame on a lacerated leg. As the others stamped out the final sparks they heard a wild laugh high above them. Looking up they saw the figure of Wolf, naked against the moonlit sky, gesticulating and dancing. Then it vanished.

In the middle of the night, with the wounds bandaged and all asleep, a great boulder came hurtling through the roof of the house, breaking thatch and floor. Another followed and another, narrowly missing them. They ran out and the bombardment ceased. The skyline was still luminous and once again they saw Wolf, bending over, yelling incoherencies down at them, bursting into maniac laughter. Suddenly he vanished. Brett and Walker started to scale the trail.

Before they reached the summit there was a red flare in the heavens. Atop the cliff they saw the beacon burning fiercely. Wolf was nowhere to be seen. But he must have stolen fire, the idea forming in his apish brain after seeing them fight the dogs. They kept a fire burning in good weather in a big ring of stones to offset the bother of remaking. He had crept down and taken a burning bough. Wolf had gone amuck. He was bent on their destruction.

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CHAPTER XI

WOLF

THE next day Brett, Walker, Bowman and O'Neill started out in grim earnest to hunt Wolf down. He could not be allowed to remain at large. Brown and Tully nursed their wounds. They kept up a treatment of cold water bandages as the best at hand. The wounds seemed healthy and inclined to heal, a tribute to their open life. The professor acted as nurse and Malone remained as guard.

He had discovered a bitch lying in the cleft. She had been stunned and was in whelp. By one of the quirks in his nature Malone determined to win her friendship and bring up the pups as playmates. One of the beast's legs was cut with a spearhead, practically hamstrung and she could not get away. Malone took her water which she lapped after he was out of sight. He was confident that hunger and her maternal instincts would bring her to accept hospitality. He meant to keep her until the pups were weaned. If she remained stubborn they could be tamed. He made a bed of ferns for her and placed food near her, disclaiming all thought of sympathy.

"A pup or two'll come in handy for company," was all he vouchsafed.

The hunt was without result. They kept it up for a week, scouring the island, but Wolf, dodging or hiding in trees, eluded them. Twice they saw smoke, once they ran across warm ashes. He had managed to retain his fire or, stimulated by its past possession, had managed to combine flint and stone.

Brown's leg healed first. Tully's arm still bothered him. The muscles had been lacerated and they responded slowly to treatment. The great luck they had had was lack of serious illness or accident. Professor Harland was heavier and stronger, their balanced diet agreed with them. Malone helped to repair the house while the chase for Wolf was on. The disaster seemed to have knit them all together a little. He had got to the point where he could touch the bitch. Toward the rest she maintained invincible hostility. The litter was born the day they gave up the pursuit of Wolf. Malone protested strenously against moving her and they found a temporary larder.

They had furniture now. Tables, chairs, hammocks. The food was dished up. They had individual plates, knives and forks carved from hog bones and tusks. The bark cloth was easy to manufacture and they used it for towels. One thing Brett had insisted upon and Walker and Tully had backed him, the maintained sanitation of the camp. Garbage was burned or buried. Before they went out after Wolf they had skinned the dead dogs and they worked on the hides with water, salt, lye-water and ashes, scraping them clean, securing in the end fairly soft leather.

The matter of jerkins, breeches, shoes was only one of ingenutiy and supply. Hats were plaited by the professor. In two months they had emerged from disaster to comparative comfort. Their bodies were cared for. Only their minds needed salvage.

The house was on the north side of the cañon. To the west trees grew thickly on the slope of the cliff. To the east they were scarcer. The place was shady but basked in the afternoon sun. They no longer thought about moving. They had gone a few times on a picnic to the southern harbor, visiting the hot springs and the beach, where they caught a few turtles. Yet discontent smoldered.

Brett, coming back from his boating, would find them sitting silent. The committees were broken up. The necessary work got barely done and that was all. Malone played with his puppies when the mother would let him. Professor Harland painted his hexameters. Walker tried his hand at making a fiddle and failed. Tully and Bowman had made a set of dominos but lost taste for the game. Time dragged and dragged.

There came two days of fierce storm, the river in spate, furious winds, trees crashing. Then a week of strong sunshine, starting with a spell of humidity that sapped their energies. The ferns crisped, grasses yellowed, leaves fell from the trees. Stones were blistering to the touch, the island seemed desiccating. They lost their appetites and with them tempers. Brett strove for control against the gibes of Malone who lost no opportunity for jeering on every occasion. At the end of the fourth week the bitch disappeared. She had lost her milk and interest in her litter. They were practically weaned but four of the seven died and Malone soured more than ever.

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"What he needs is a good licking," said Brown. "I'd like to give it to him but he leaves me alone."

"No sense in starting anything."

"It 'ud do 'im a lot of good. Why don't you give it to 'im when he sneers at you?"

Brett stared. He knew he was not a coward but he had always figured that a personal clash with the husky oiler would mean his own defeat. He had no desire to display his own inferiority or lose prestige. That was natural enough.

"Yes, you," Brown went on. "You're built right. Look at the muscle you've put on. You're solid as I am. You've got the devil's own reach. I don't suppose you've been in a scrap all your life, but if you 'ad a little science I'd pick you for a nasty one to tackle. You ain't the same man who came off the steamer."

It was true enough, though Brett had scarcely realized the extent of his development. He knew he could lift weights easily that once he would never have dreamed of attempting. He could paddle with any of them, haul, fell trees.

"If I 'ad your noodle I'd be champion," persisted Brown. "Though a lot of good it would do me. What say we spar a bit—for the fun of it?"

Brett hailed this as a welcome exercise. Brown went with him in the canoe and they would land and box—open-handed at first, then with their fists padded in bark-cloth. Brown got to calling him Fitzsimmons, only half in jest, for Brett developed a good judgment of distance, effective footwork and a capacity for landing staggering blows.

"I'd give 'alf my meals for a week to see you tackle Malone," he said one day. "You'd give 'im the surprize of 'is life." But Brett saw no wisdom in open quarreling.

WOLF struck for the second time with a maniac's craft and malice. Once more he chose the middle of the night. The rain had held off, the season seemed changing, the woods were dry as tinder. They had been careful of their fires. And they had forgotten the burning of the beacon, since replaced.

They woke to the fierce roar of a conflagration that gathered way and force with astounding speed. Wolf had set fire to the timber on the east and the draft that always sucked up the cañon at nightfall had fanned it swiftly beyond control. Tongues of flame leaped up, blazing fragments rocketed ahead of the main fire, carried up in the heated air, dropping down to start fresh flares.

Crackling, snapping, seething, with explosions that sent live masses leaping up in volcanic blasts, the flames swept on. The house was doomed by the time they were down the ladder. The tremendous heat drove them down to the river, across it, where they watched the total destruction of all their labor. The camp was obliterated in a moment, devoured in the maw of the moving furnace. They saved practically nothing. Malone dragged out his whining puppies. The professor snatched his precious sheets and Brett salved his diary. That was all. Home, its belongings, clothes, labor, everything was wiped out, except the canoes and the weir. Even they were scorched.

They stood on the farther bank, realizing the extent of their disaster.

"I'd like to catch 'im and chuck 'im into the middle of it," said Walker at last. 'Is island, 'e told Malone. So 'e tried to burn us alive."

"It might have been accidental," said Brett. "A chafing bough would have done it this weather."

The contradiction came pat to his sentences. Wolf stood on the cliff at the top of the waterfall, his nude body copper bright in the glow of the fire, sweeping on up the cañon. He cupped his hands and shouted something they could not hear and jumped up and down in devilish glee or in rage that they had escaped. They had no weapons, so soundly had they slept and so little time had been given them. They started for him empty-handed, Malone thrusting his puppies into the arms of the professor.

He was out of sight when they gained the head of the fall. The rocks held no tracks; the glare of the fire revealed nothing. But they kept on, naked as they were, for they had been sleeping through the heat without even covering. They divided, splitting up into groups that broke again, seeking for a chance to give the view-halloo. Brett found himself with Malone, racing along the cliffs toward the watershed. Tully and Bowman made toward the woods. Walker and O'Neill headed at a tangent for the swamp. Brown kept to the bed of the ravine.

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The thinning woods slowed the fire on the other side. The main forest would not be touched. The swamp would check it to the south if it turned that way. It would probably die out on the short turf and willows of the saddle. A pall of smoke rolled up, the westering moon shining on it. The cañon floor and the cliffs were bright with a ruddy glare.

As they neared the junction of the tributary flowing south with the main river, Brett caught sight of Brown running fast and with apparent purpose. He looked up, caught sight of them and shouted, pointing ahead. Malone gave a cry.

"There he goes!"

Wolf was well away, close to the source of the river. In a few minutes he reached the slope that ran sharply down to the west, ending in a wide crevasse that might have been made by earthquake. Its deep bottom was thick with trees but its almost vertical sides were bare. They had searched it twice for Wolf after finding the remains of a fire in the glen.

Brown was much closer to Wolf than Brett and Malone. The going was better for him and the crossing of the tributary had delayed them. But they panted on, getting their second wind, resolute for punishment. They topped the last rise and saw Brown closing in on Wolf with a tremendous burst of speed, striding down the declivity at a headlong pace that seemed almost certain to plunge him into the gulf. Wolf angled off, glancing back.

He saw Brett and Malone heading him away from the only practical descent into the glen, hesitated, ran on, then turned at bay on the edge. He had his club with him and swung it as Brown, checking himself with difficulty but carrying speed, ran in on him.

The club came down. It looked as if it had landed on Brown's head but the crafty fighter ducked, side-stepped, caught the uplifting arm as it whirled for a second blow. He smashed a blow at Wolf's stomach and caught him higher—over the heart. The madman staggered from the impact, but the punch did not seem to hurt him. Brown followed up, smashing for the jaw. The slug went home to the point and Wolf's head rocked, yet he seemed insensitive of the jar save as the success of the blow infuriated him. He wrenched free from Brown's grip and swung his club again. It struck Brown's shoulder and he sagged. Brett groaned as he strove to mend his pace. He had outstripped Malone but he was still two hundred yards away.

Brown clinched and the two figures, locked together, swayed on the very verge. Once Wolf fairly lifted the prize-fighter from his feet and whirled him toward the abyss. Somehow Brown entangled his legs and the two fell, rolling, striking. Brett pounded on. The twisting pair writhed closer and closer, Wolf on top, raining down blows with his fists. He had lost his club in the wrestle and one of them had kicked it over the edge.

Brown heaved. Brett saw his knees go up. Wolf toppled and Brown got on his hands and knees, facing the gulf. Brett was twenty yards away. Wolf leaped on the back of his opponent, striving to throttle him. Up shot Brown's hands, clamping the other's wrists. Brett was close enough to see the great muscles bunching on the fighter's back as he made his final effort. Wolf parabolaed through the air, half hauled, half propelled, over Brown's head and went whistling down into the deep rift. As Brett arrived on the edge the man's body struck the slope, somersaulted, struck again and went rolling, rolling down to the tree tops far below. Brown flopped over on his back exhausted.

"It was 'im or me," he gasped. "Broke my shoulder, I think. Busted my ribs. Fought like a—go-rill—" He straightened out with limbs twitching, unconscious.

"Some scrap," grunted Malone, kneeling with Brett beside the winner. "He had better luck than I did. We're through with Wolf."

They were. They made their way down the glen later but they found only what the wild pigs had left of the Slovak.

CHAPTER XII

REACTION

IN THE torrid weather that prevailed for two weeks after the disaster they lived from hand to mouth. All Brett could finally prevail on them to do was to erect a grass shelter not far from the hot springs. They fished and grubbed enough to live upon, fortunate in finding turtles' eggs. They seemed stunned by the loss of all they had labored for. And the heat sapped their energies. The professor began to wilt

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again. Brown's injuries bothered him and Brett feared their surgery was insufficient. His shoulder blade seemed splintered; two ribs were undoubtedly crushed.

Walker and O'Neill passed their days on the beach, apart, gazing gloomily out to sea. Walker's slogan of "are we down'earted" changed to a sullen challenge of "w'ot's the blooming use?" Malone, with his puppies, consorted with Tully and Bowman. The canoes remained where they were in the river beside the neglected weir. Brett himself felt the languor of the enervating warmth and wondered how long it would last. Gradually his ambition returned.

Much of his time was put in looking after Brown and coaxing the professor to eat. He looked at the others with their shaggy beards, their rags of clothing, unwashed bodies; their broken, dirty nails, their dejected mien—and reacted to it.

"We are acting like a bunch of quitters," he said to Brown. "I've discovered one thing, the line between man and brute is a fine one. A comb and a cake of soap go a long way toward civilization. We can do everything over again better and quicker than we did before. Let's hop to it."

"You can't do anything with 'em," said Brown. "They've lost 'eart. They've made up their minds they've got to live 'ere till they croak and they don't care 'ow they do it."

"Well, I do. And I'm going to reorganize."

"More power to you," said Brown. "Wish I could 'elp you more."

Brett called a council at the evening meal but got little response. A call for committees on the original plan met with silence and a laugh from Malone.

"Wolf thought he owned the island," he jeered. "If you think you do—you don't. I'm enjoying myself. So are the boys. To —— with your system!"

Brett looked at him closely. He remembered Walker's remark about the liquor and wondered if Malone had been able to make some. They had found a species of sorghum that they chewed like sugar cane. Crushed, the juice might ferment. The three had been going off down the beach of late and staying all day. He had seen the smoke of a fire and Tully's hands had been daubed with clay more than once as if he had resumed his pottery, though he had displayed no results.

That night rain fell. Brett lay out in it for a while after he awakened. It was warm but the air was cooling fast. It rained the next day and the next and then it cleared but continued cloudy. The hot spell had passed. There was a manifest revival of spirits but no disposition to get together again. Brett persuaded Walker to go with him for one of the canoes. They took the professor back on the trip for the next one.

"I've got an idea," he confided to them as they sailed outside the reef. "I've been working it out for a long time. If the chaps will pitch in and rebuild, put us where we were before, I'll give them the means of getting away. I can make a seaworthy craft. It won't be pretty and it won't make a record for speed, but it will be fairly safe. It really isn't my own idea. It came out of stories I have read, piecing the details together, thinking it out a bit and experimenting a little—before we were burned out.

"It will be a hazardous trip, but they are going to the dogs here and if they want to tackle it I believe there's a fair chance of their making the South American continent before their food gives out. The main winds are northeast and southeast. They might be more favorable for my type of boat. It may mean landing in Chili or up nearer Panama. Their best chance of all will be to be picked up by some freighter or vessel plying from the Panama Canal to Australia. It's a gamble."

"How long will it take to build?" asked Walker.

"I should say ten weeks—say three months—with all hands putting in half time."

"Why half time? W'ots the sense in making a lot of pottery and furniture and stuff we can't take with us? Or building a big 'ouse?" Walker was plainly interested in the plan. He sat up, his wrinkled face in its frame of ginger whiskers shining with eagerness. He seemed ten years younger.

"Because I don't intend to have to do it all myself after the boat leaves."

"You're not going?" The steward's face was a study of astonishment.

"No. I like this place. I am going to make something of it. I am healthier and stronger, happier—or as happy—than I have ever been. This island of Nowhere can be made a garden in time."

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"An Eveless Eden. Not for mine."

"We'll get along without Eves. There are no serpents anyway. I'm going to stay, Walker. Any one else is welcome to go or leave. And I'm not going to live like a savage. We've shown what can be done as a start. Lord, man, it's like opening a mine and leaving it. Back home I was a go-between, a middleman of adventure, a dealer in other men's stories. I don't know how many of those writers lived the sort of thing they described. I'm going to.

"Maybe I'll write a book about it. If you chaps get clear, you can send me down some supplies. I've some property over there that can be realized upon—a few thousand dollars—so I won't miss what Wolf stole. I suppose that's gone. If I can get seeds down here, some tools, a book or two, I'll make a Paradise out of this. And I'll be my own man."

"You'll be that all right. You know what the French say. Every one to 'is taste. I'll tyke my chance on the boat. 'Ow about you, prof?"

Professor Harland smiled at Brett amiably. He was getting back his strength again. His face was flushed with the sea wind and his eyes were bright.

"If you men would send me some pen and ink and a few books, including my last edition of the Aeneid, published by The Cosmos Company of Boston, when you make Brett's shipment, I am inclined to think I shall stay with him. It will be a wonderful opportunity to rewrite my work."

"—— b'li'my!" ejaculated Walker. "Who'll ever see it?"

"This place will be on the map some day, Walker. And I fancy it will be worth while putting there. I don't think Brett wants to—to hog it. Just to make something of it. I can understand his feelings."

Walker scratched his head.

"I'm blowed if I can," he said. "Tell us about the boat."

"I'll have a model in a day or two. Then we'll talk."

Brett's plan was a big catamaran, to be formed of two of the largest logs they could find. These would be double outriggered to port of one canoe and starboard of the other. They would build up gunwales and, if possible, provide for water-tight compartments for extra buoyancy and to avoid superfluous bailing. They would be made with thwarts for paddling.

Across them, amidships, he intended to build a stout platform. The masts, main and jigger, would go through the floor and be stepped and braced on other connecting timbers. The deck would give head-room for paddlers when the wind failed. There would be a deck-house sturdy enough to resist the weather, thatched and with sides of interwoven boughs.

He had to combine lightness with strength. The sails would be their closest matting and extra ones would be carried with the stores. Water would have to be stowed in jars. They could winnow rice, smoke hams, dry fish, take a certain amount of fresh vegetables and fruit. Navigation would be due east with allowance for the winds. If the southeast wind prevailed they would pick up the north star before long.

He made his working model with the two canoes, working in an inlet, Walker aiding him and the professor. Brown he took into the secret. The others did not disturb him. He had to take the craft into the open to demonstrate his sail plan, but it seemed to arouse no excitement ashore.

They beached the *Hope*, as the model was called, in anticipation of the larger craft, at sunset, and Brett broached his project after the meal.

"There's the model," he said. "I should call it a success. It's up to you to say whether you want to take the chance."

Silence held for a minute while their faces grew sanguine. Malone spoke first, with a string of oaths. This time there was no doubt but what he had been drinking some sort of alcohol. Tully and Bowman did not show it so plainly. In the flush of his experiment Brett had not noticed them particularly.

"Going to stay behind, are you?" said Malone. "That suits me. To a T. Maybe we'll manage to get along without you. But if you think we're going to sweat to fix you up all snug before we go, you're crazier than Wolf. I'm going to tell you what I think of you, you——"

Brett stopped the flow of oaths with a straight punch to the mouth. He knew as he stepped back that he had been aching to give Malone a beating for weeks. There was no better time than this—if he would fight.

Malone wiped away the blood with a dash of his hand.

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"I'll make a pulp of you!" he said.

The rest tried to interfere, but Brown called them off.

"You leave him alone," he said. "This is going to be good. If it lasts long enough."

It was a vicious enough encounter. Malone rushed, swinging with both fists, clutching at Brett when he countered with hard jolts to the face and side. He fought foul, punching for the groin, using his knees, but Brett was cool and broke the clinch undamaged, ending it with an uppercut that staggered Malone and broke his confidence.

Malone's head seemed to clear as he fought. And he was a master of rough and tumble work. Brown danced about the pair calling to Brett not to mix it. There was no question of seconds or of regular rounds. It was a test of skill and endurance.

Once Brett slipped, dropped to one knee and Malone started to kick him in the ribs. Brown darted in and flung him back.

"You fight fair!" he said. "Or I'll lick you myself!"

Brett's muscles were recent. Malone had the heavier slogging power, the shoulder equipment of the coal-heaver. When he got home a blow it fell like a sledge-hammer. Brett felt his strength being pounded out of him. His arms grew heavy; his fists seemed lumps of lead. Malone had closed one of his eyes, his lungs labored and he could taste the blood that overcharged the membranes of his mouth.

He feinted and tapped Malone lightly on the jaw. The oiler lunged for him, broke through his guard and hammered him on the side of the neck and back of one ear. He felt himself growing dizzy, his knees failing him; he saw Malone through a mist. He had only a few tricks after all. He had shot his bolt. He grappled with Malone, leaning on him, trying to control the other's flailing arms, sinking his face on Malone's shoulder.

" 'Old 'im! 'Old 'im!" Brown's voice, far away.

A thump landed on his kidneys, stabbing him with pain. Malone had the heel of one hand under his chin, forcing it back. Dully Brett struggled to avoid the blow. A spurt of energy came to him and he brought up his left, blindly enough. It caught Malone full in the nose and the blood gushed out. Brett felt his grasp loosening and stepped back, though he thought he would fall. Friendly hands caught him and he found himself sitting on the knee of Walker. Some one dashed water in his face, gave him some to drink.

The haze cleared and he saw Malone sitting on a rock, arms dangling, the blood pouring from his nose. Brown appeared from seemingly thin air.

"Got 'im going," he said. "Stand off and fight 'im next time. E's got more than 'e's sent." Brett grasped the idea that the pause was one of mutual consent. Malone had stepped back when he did. No one was attending the oiler.

"Go and give him some water," he said to Walker.

"You save your breath. 'Ere, Tully, chuck some over 'im."

"Time."

Malone was more cautious until he found Brett commencing to outrange him. Brett discovered he could reach the other's face almost at will with his left. And he knew he was going to win the fight. He met a wild rush with a hard jab and, as Malone stood head to head with him and began to swing, he mixed it. He could hear the excited yelling of the little ring and Walker's reiteration:

"Upstairs. Oh, *'it* 'im upstairs!"

The meaning of this came to him in a flash. He jolted his right up from the hip. It traveled less than a foot and struck against bone. Some thing cracked in his hand. But Malone slumped, sagging to the ground and Brown stood over him counting exultantly.

"No rules in this fight," said Walker, "but 'e may as well count 'im out. You copped 'im a sweet one."

Malone raised his head at nine but dropped it again. It was Brett who helped him to rise. To his astonishment, Malone, swaying groggily, grinned at him with his bloody mouth and the grin was friendly. More, he extended his hand.

"You win," he said. "I didn't think you could do it, but you're the better man. I'm licked. And I'm back of you after this." He spat out a tooth and wiped his gory face. "I mean it, Brett. You're there. I know when I'm licked. That ends it. Put it there."

IT WAS fifteen weeks instead of Brett's estimated twelve, when the *Hope* stood out to sea through the entrance of the southern harbor. The model catamaran escorted her, running almost out

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of sight of land, reluctant to leave the argonauts. The larger boat sailed well, but the lesser kept close until the breeze strengthened, well off shore. A sweep was rigged as rudder and Walker was the helmsman. The others clustered by him.

"*Oh rewar,*" he shouted. "If we get through, you'll see me back again."

"Good luck to you!"

Brett lowered his sail and came about. His eyes were dim. As they beat up for the island he watched the *Hope* diminishing until only her big sail showed golden in the sun. Then he turned to his companions. There were two of them. Malone, at the last minute, had elected to stay.

"Out there I don't amount to much," he said. "Plain mucker, that's me. I'd be it again. I'm going to stick with the prof—and you, Brett. I wouldn't wonder but what I'll make quite a farmer, after all. I'd hate to leave my pups, I'd hate to see 'em seasick. I guess I'll stay, if I'm welcome?"

One other thing Malone had done. When the lists were being made out—letters written, arrangements planned to send or bring back supplies to the island, Malone handed Brett the money taken from the professor.

"I had a hunch where Wolf put it," he said. "I twigged it when we went down into the glen and found what was left of him. There was a hollow in a tree and a bit of bark was knocked off. At the time the money wouldn't do me any good and I wasn't aimin' you should get it. That stuff's off. I haven't any kale of my own, but, if you want to tip me a reward, for —— sake ask 'em to send me a pound or two of real smoking, will you?"

* * *

The three—Brett, Harland, Malone—climbed the peak on the eastern promontory and caught a last glimpse of the *Hope*. Below them, on the beach margin, half hidden by shade trees, stood their bungalow. The triangle of sail, only a speck on the horizon, burnished by the sun, dwindled—vanished. They looked at each other with the unasked question in their eyes. Then they went slowly down the crater.

The Man who hated Dogs

By Bruce Johns

TURLY placed William Tell in care of an Indian who lived near the shack, and started across the hills to see the marvel of Athabasca early one day in July. By noon he punched at the unlatched door of Tony's shack and walked in.

Tony Lasarge, sitting on a cane chair that had traveled many miles by diverse means since it was manufactured in Michigan, looked up from a ski ankle-strap he was oiling and smiled. They shook hands as if it were an afterthought and Turly sat down on another cane chair without ceremony and began to talk in the blunt fashion of those who only hear their native tongues from another's mouth very few times in a year.

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"Tony, you and me is kinda —— fools fightin' thataway."

"Sure," said Tony. "Now you talk!"

"And over nothin', Tony. You don't like dergs. I do. Why should I care if you don't like 'em? That's your business; huh, Tony?"

"Yea; my business."

He plunged a waxed thread into the huge eye of a needle.

"But I insult you over it. My fault. Get good smashin'. Sore two-three week."

"Me, too. Almost kill me. Over somethin' you say about a derg I offer. No drinks before at all, you or me. Over somethin' I say back to you. What do you say anyway then?"

"I forgit," said Tony. "We don't care. Got some gin. Have swig? Sure good."

Turly had some of the gin, taking it in mouthfuls which he worked around his large teeth before swallowing.

"Sure good!"

Tony smacked his lips appreciatively, held the bottle up to the light and then put it down on the table with a thump.

"I don't need a derg anyhow," he said decisively. "I have a cougar."

There was a short silence. Turly moved his hand toward the ski-strap Tony had placed on the table to enjoy a drink with his visitor, found the bottle instead and had a generous drink.

"S'funny," he stated.

"Nuthin' so funny thereat," returned Tony. "I like him."

"——! I can't understand it."

"——!" returned Tony.

They both had another drink.

A short silence followed that was ended abruptly by the keen sound of sharp nails on the wall.

"What's that?" ejaculated Turly, throwing his holster instinctively forward until it hung below the buckle of his belt.

"The cat," Lasarge informed him. "In his own hangout. Cubby, meppe you call him. Got a door. Opens it. Meppe now."

Turly eyed his friend a bit apprehensively and he shuddered as if he were cold.

"A panther," he said. "Not in here! Not a door he can claw open and come in here! You're crazy, Tony!"

"Crazy be ——," returned Lasarge calmly. "Throw thata gun 'round back your hip."

Turly swung the holster over his hip and tried to appear unconcerned.

"Is he a regulah one?" he asked.

"House bruk," explained Tony.

"O. K. meppe," said Turly. "O. K. Only, mind you, if he climbs up atop the door I go. When they clumb high up they mean trouble and when they reach high up they give it."

"He don't clumb much," replied Tony. "He ain't a wild un. Ain't never been learned to clumb and spring by no grown-up."

Turly held his eyes in the direction of the sliding-door he had seen in the corner and from whence had come the sound of the scratching. Suddenly he saw the door move slightly and come to a stop, leaving a slit of about one inch through which came long claws. There was a grunt and the door flew open, disclosing the head of a young panther. To Turley's horror, the animal slunk in, crossed the room, dropped noiselessly before the stove and placed his head near his master's feet.

Turly thought he heard it purr. He saw Lasarge drop his hand carelessly upon the animal's head. Then Turly reached for the bottle and drank deeply, keeping his eyes upon the cat, now almost asleep. He drew the sleeve of his mackinaw across his mouth in a slow, nervous drag and tried to laugh.

"——! I never see the like. Ain't you afeard sometime? I ain't afeard of none of 'em on the trail; killed 'em; fought 'em and killed 'em—but inside the hut, right aside the chair—livin' in a coop right aside your bed—good ——!"

"You're crazy," exclaimed Tony. "You got your derg, ain't you? Keep him right aside your bed, don't you?"

"Yea, yea; but a panther ain't a derg, Tony."

"No, thank God!" said Tony evenly and yet without bitterness.

Turly rocked back on the hind legs of his cane chair and prepared to make the longest continuous speech of his life.

"Hey, you Tony," he began as he brought the chair back on its four legs with a thump, "you're crazy. You fight me like the devil when I want to give you a derg; you don't want no dirty derg, you say; then you go and take up with a filthy, sneaky panther cat. Some day the —— thing'll jump on you when you walk in the door; take a hunk right out of your —— fool neck. Then

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what, Tony, then what? There's somethin' wrong about you. Ain't nateral to love a thing like that. Bad enough to have it around, but to care for it——!"

Turly ended his longest speech with an awed curse that came from his deep throat with effort. Lasarge had sat stolidly throughout the dissertation, his eyes closed, his thick lips loosely open, his head thrown back as if he were taking in some sage advice and pondering over it. At last he opened his eyes and looked toward his warning visitor.

"I don't think this'll all happen," he stated definitely.

"Why?"

"Because when he gets away from me, Turly, he get croaked."

"What's that? You what?"

"I say he get croaked. Bumped. Animal; see? Nothin' else. Don't think I'd sit here, seein' him get wild in eye and stan' for it. Bang. You know. Rifle when he ain't lookin', or when he is lookin' if it has to be."

"Then I don't see why you want him 'round. Cain't be fond of no thing you got to kill someday meppe."

"I keep him account the meppe," said Tony. "Meppe he don't get wild—then I got 'em all beat for a somethin' to keep me company, somethin' to be with me when them long nights come on. Huh? Right?"

"No. But why should we meppe fight over it I cain't see, Tony. I guess I'll go back."

"Too far," said Tony. "I'll put the cat in coop and lock it in for the night, since you hate him so."

"Couldn't sleep. Cat, a panther, in the next room. The —— thing ought to be killed!"

Tony looked suddenly at his friend and then held up a warning hand.

"You say thata mine," he said, "then I say thata yours."

Turly was silent for some time.

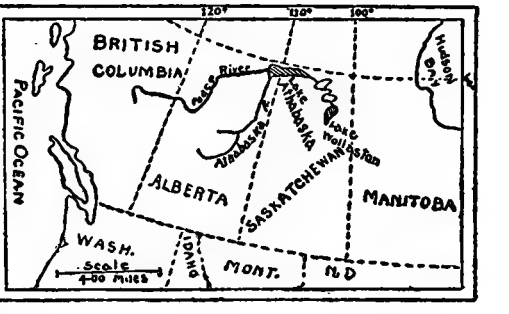
"I don't see how you figure it out," he exclaimed at last. "The derg ain't no wonder but he's a derg."

"This cougar ain't no wonder neither, but he ain't no derg."

"Well, at least we known where we are at," said Turly.

They had another drink and Tony chased the cat into its own cubby and locked the door upon it.

TONY was a lonely man—a case of preference both of himself and others who had known him very well when he lived in Logton, sub-headquarters of the Royal Mounted in years gone by when the character of the population had made necessary a rigid enforcement of law. Lasarge was satisfied with himself, and that was probably the reason he lived in upper Athabasca territory, removed from the



slightest trace of civilization by forty miles of the roughest, coldest and most heartless trails in all Canada. If he hated the distant civilization, he had never told any one so directly. It is true he had intimated as much upon several occasions by his refusals of friendships and his evident fear of the breaking down of his forty-mile barrier.

And, of course, there is the memorable time when he had been offered a young dog for a companion and he had cursed for many minutes, ending his flow of blasphemy only when young Benjamin Turly crashed his fist into his teeth and knocked him down.

The fight that had followed the blow had been the talk of Logton for several weeks and long after Tony had taken his bruised and beaten but undefeated body back to his shack on the range. Turly and Lasarge had fought in the code of the country, making vicious use of every brutal advantage of it.

The first blow had been struck by Turly because he lost his temper when he heard Lasarge curse all dogs in the world. When Tony regained his feet, the crowd in the saloon had closed in upon them and stripped them of their guns and then turned them loose upon each other's throats. Perhaps Turly was unconsciously defending the general species, dog, in his blind and bitter struggle against the defiler of "man's best friend," or it may have been just a battle between two natural enemies, who always meet and fight if they stay long enough in

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the northern land of candid words and frank opinions.

At any rate they fought almost half an hour and were finally pulled apart by the crowd, which had become bored at seeing two exhausted men rolling on the floor, clawing hopelessly at one another. A stove and its long pipe had come down near the end of the fray and sturdy hands set to work replacing it immediately. It was an act of emergency and when it had been completed Turly and Lasarge were attended to.

Perhaps it was the cause of the fight that made it worthy of being added to the general history of the place, for it was an ordinary brawl after all, a common enough thing at that time certainly in Logton. But behind it all lay the fact that no man in Upper Canada will allow the cursing of his dog to go unchallenged.

In his solemn moments, let it be known, the Logtonian is wont to think of a dog as a friend, a big brute that won a race or killed a puma or drew a sled over a pass and saved a life. The husky of Upper Northwest Canada, around the Great Slave Lakes for instance, is the one companion of the white man, almost his human friend, if you will—as in the case of Turly's dog, William Tell, who, to his master at least, had a soul. And where Turly's dog had a soul, the catamount of Lasarge had none. And in another way the men were just as different.

A taciturnity, tempered strongly with a secret admiration for each other's tried strength, had fastened itself upon both men as a result of their battle. It is true that, somewhat rested, their wounds roughly dressed and their parched throats washed with more drinks than were good for their taxed hearts, they shook hands and said it was all forgotten. But those who stood around that day shook their heads in their quiet, cynical fashion, for both Lasarge and Turly were trappers and followed game in the same district. The men of Logton thought of things more pleasant as they bid Tony *au revoir* when he struck out for his homeward trip.

ATHABASCA district of the Northwest Territories is made up largely of wooded plains broken by low mountain ranges. There are many more old posts of the Hudson's Bay Company in it than communities by a very, very long margin, many of which had been abandoned many years before. Both Turly and Lasarge were merely "cleaning up" the region for the company, holding the franchises more or less precariously and listening with deaf ears to the complaints of the Strongbows and the Beaver Indians.

And so it was not surprizing to hear that the following Winter after the fight Turly left the trapping section between the big and little Wallaston Lakes for a try on the territory to the direct east that had been "resting" for many years. This gave Tony a free rein in the hills that had been the common hunting-grounds of both for many years.

Friends of both men, if one can say either had them, smiled when they heard of Turly's move. Old Jay Greene, "mayor" of Logton, termed it dip-lomatcy on the part of Turly, but others who knew the men laid it to an out and out desire of the good-natured Turly to give Tony time to forget the episode that had followed the offer of a dog. To Turly's mind the entire trouble must have taken on the aspect of the foolish, for he openly told friends when he passed through Logton that he believed he had been a "dumb-head"—but that he was willing to be a dumb-head again if necessary.

Nevertheless, Turly was very willing that the affair be closed and that both continue trapping in the joint territory—the only good peltry district not worn out at that time in Athabasca—he with his camp at the Little Wallaston and Tony on the greater lake. And to this end he returned in the Spring to the lakes with William Tell, now full grown. He had had poor luck in the eastern region, as he must have known he would have before he started, and it was with little misgiving that he turned over his sled dogs to the Post Kennels of famous Charlie Riel at Fond du Lac and went to his cabin on the lake shore for the short Summer.

The distance between the two cabins was probably fifteen miles and although it could be done it was seldom that either returned home the same day of a visit to the other. That was in the old days, the end of which had been marked by the fight.

Turly had heard of Tony having the panther from the Strongbow Indians, who often wandered into the east for the precious silver tail. They carried the word to beware of Lasarge, the company man. He had a

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panther house pet, and dog may eat dog, but panther will eat both.

Turly wanted to see Lasarge. He wanted to let him know he held no remnant of the quarrel's hatred as an aftermath—and, of course, he wanted to see a grown panther being treated and behaving as a house pet. Turly did not fear for his reception. Lasarge would welcome him. Turly was now the only white man within forty miles' radius. Neither had seen each other since the fight, and after all fights in this country were affairs that came and went as easily as the snow of late Fall. Of course, William Tell must not go. That was an irrevocable decision.

And young Turly went, drank, saw and came back, the spleen of disgust swelling his veins.

THE Summer ended earlier than usual that year and September found Turly already oiling his traps and planning their positions for the time when it would be a difficult piece of work to visit the snares. In the little hut some fifteen miles distant, Tony Lasarge was going through the same process of preparation. And although the men worked similarly in every move as they slowly and painfully awaited the time when they would set their first traps, at Tony's feet lay the panther, and in contrast, a rather common dog lay on the floor of the Turly hut.

The panther was almost full grown; the dog well into his adult stages, both rather faulty companions of two rather faulty men.

Since the meeting when Turly had first seen the panther, the two men had not met. Although they were the only two whites in the region there was one big difference between them which they could not and did not attempt to deny and which held them apart forever—for neither could change their loves.

But this difference could only hold them apart spiritually perhaps, for even as they were tacitly agreeing to see nothing of each other, they were unconsciously planning their trap-routes so that they overlapped. It was a slim chance they would meet on two routes of about twenty miles circuit at the overlapping point, but slim chances are what make and break men in the country of the northern lights.

Turly and his dog had now become fast friends; a relationship not based in any degree upon the fact that the man and the dog were mediocre personages of their respective castes. Turly loved William Tell, loved him as few men love an animal; and the measure worked also for William Tell, who would have given his life for his master if the calling were not too precarious and did not foretell death before he entered the breach. For William Tell was a good dog—and that was all, sufficient perhaps for the north where to be "good" is often more than enough.

Perhaps Fate in all its inexorable manner of working out a problem willed that the day before the complete set-in of Winter should be the day that the meeting of the men should occur, for the meeting was the end of things as far as the future of the district is concerned. The Indians there have marked that day as one for sad memories. With it passes always the season of Fall. And with it in years past went the posts of Turly and Lasarge from the string of Hudson's Bay stations.

TURLY, followed by William Tell, was nearing the crest of the hill in the heavy snow whirl when he suddenly saw the panther. That he saw only the panther is the reason for the end. The beast was down low on the snow. Turly thought it was crouching for a spring, but he did not bring his rifle to his shoulder. There was something in the animal's markings that held his hand. He thought immediately of the panther being Tony's, for in this time of year the beasts were rare and usually hunted much farther south.

There was a sudden parting of a snow-laden pine and Turly saw Tony coming up the hill. He hailed him. Tony shouted wildly in return and waved his padded hands. Turly did not catch just what the warning was, but he knew instinctively it was something about William Tell. He turned to look for the dog.

He was already on the run toward the panther.

Turly shouted and ran forward. He failed. The two great things crashed together, all teeth and steel legs. There was no doubt from the beginning that the panther was the superior fighter. It had the natural training of its kin during the years since the animal world has been fighting for its food and its life. The dog had the

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handicap of domestic training of almost the same length of time as the cat.

They fought with bitterness that could only end in death. The panther was quick and vicious, the dog steady, strong and tenacious. But there could only be one end, and both men standing there afraid to enter the battle, unable to break them, realized this from the moment it all began.

"——!" said Tony. "How it happen?"

"Just happen," Turly informed him.

The two looked solemnly at each other and there was no special animosity as they watched their pets in the death struggle.

"Dead," said Turly laconically.

"Both," returned Tony.

Turly watched the panther suddenly lift itself from under the dog's plunge, spring away and flash back upon William Tell, taking him under the left ear. It was the death grip.

There was a sudden hush.

"He's dead," said Tony.

"Ain't!" returned Turly.

And suddenly snatching his revolver from its canvas holster he sent an unerring bullet into the panther's head.

"——!" said Tony.

They both rushed forward. William Tell was very weak. Turly was many miles from his hut, but he gathered his dog into his arms and without a word of apology turned and fled with him up the hill.

Tony stood there leaning against his rifle for some time and let him go. He turned the panther over with his foot. Then he waited until he saw Turly struggling with his burden near the top of the hill.

"A derg!" he said derisively and, waiting until Turly reached the sky-line, he aimed and fired.

William Tell jerked once spasmodically and slowly went limp in the arms of his master.

The Jack-Rabbit

By George Gilbert

"PETE BRADER'S give out, final, that you 'n he can't live on the same terr'stral ball," Anse Turner, lounging against the side of Harpen Jack's faro-joint in Lost Hope, shot out of a tensed mouth corner at Alf Simes as he was passing. "Pete's in town; has turned his wolf loose——"

"Thanks," Simes gave back, not pausing in his lounging, easy walk.

Yet at the word his right hand strayed over to his left hip to touch lightly the butt of his gun that swayed there, butt to front. For he wanted to be sure that the lethal weapon rode easily in its holster.

Up-street another man appeared in the

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open—a man who came on purposefully—a man rather thin as against Simes' bulk; a man with a dare-devil smile and a scraggly, gingery wisp of beard on his chin as against Simes' smooth face and thin-lipped, ferine certainty and assurance.

Other men snugged to buildings or in doorways, out of line of fire, as the rival badmen of the camp lessened the distance between them. For Simes, the newcomer, had clashed with Brader, one of the camp's pioneers, and now——

So close together that no one could tell which had fired first, the guns spat. Simes, his lips drawn back, was erect—Brader down, his futile gun on the ground beside him where it had fallen as his hand had relaxed from the shock of the ball through his right shoulder. Simes advanced, step by step, his gun ready for the death-shot, until he was over Brader, who remained prone, eyes staring at the end of the gun Simes kept on him.

"Yo' said yo'd get me, Brader. Well, yo' didn't."

Simes' voice, heavy with hatred, dripped down like acid into the returning consciousness of the defeated. Brader's lips framed:

"No; I didn't, Simes. I cave! Yo' win th' throw. I cave."

"Cave, do yo'? Well, then, get up an' ramble, *muy pronto*."

He stooped, took Brader's gun, worked the plunger of the side-throw-out frontier six until the chambers were empty, kept the cartridges and threw Brader the empty gun with a contemptuous oath.

"Ramble now. Pull yo' freight. I let yo' off this time, but I'm gonna kill yo' sometime, Brader. Just when yo' want life most."

Brader mumbled some humble words, swayed erect and staggered away to have his wound bandaged.

A swarm of camp-followers came from under cover to congratulate Simes on the outcome. The incident meant that Brader's reign as camp killer was ended and that a new boss had risen to the place of power in Lost Hope.

Nor did Brader aspire again to dominance during his rapid convalescence and ensuing period of hard work in his prospect hole up the gulch. Simes' victory had crushed Brader, and his attitude proved it. He developed a slouch in his walk; his gingery beard was unkempt; his shoulders stooped and he chewed incessantly, his jaw waggling on his quid, rabbit-like.

The shooting had served him one good turn—it had thrown him back upon the resources of toil, instead of his wasting his time in idle dominance in the camp's center, admired and fawned upon by the fickle habitués of the saloons and gambling-holes. Simes had taken upon him that burden, neglecting his prospect hole for the easier life of camp bully.

At times they met casually, when Brader was in for supplies or mail. And then, low, menacing, the threat again pulsed from Simes' snarly lips as he leaned carelessly against the jamb of the door of Harpen's faro-joint—

"I'm gonna kill yo' some day."

Simes just touched the butt of his lightly holstered gun, held Brader's cowed glance, then spat and turned away, as if the object of his hatred was too far beneath notice to be regarded long at a time.

Brader shuffled by, his futile gun bogging at his side. He had bought his morning drink and tobacco and was now bound for his prospect hole to labor anew.

A DOZEN men saw the incident—heard the threat. But by now it had all become something every-day, usual. It hardly raised a bit of comment up and down the camp's one street, as Brader, after a momentary stiffening behind Simes' broad back, skulked off out of public notice. Brader's chin waggled on his chew and he put a wavering hand up to steady it, so plainly did it tremble with fear. After Brader had gone away Simes wheeled and regarded his fallen rival amusedly.

"Brader might have whirled, drawn, threw down on yo', an' got yo' through th' back, Alf," Anse Turner put in. "Yo'll turn yo' back on him once't too often."

"Who? *Him?*" turning away anew that he might not give them the satisfaction of saying he had even watched the coward go. "Why, Anse, he's a jack-rabbit man, now. See that chin wag, like a rabbit's will when he's a-chewin' somethin' under a sage-brush? Him! I've tried ever' way t' get him t' make another break t' draw, so 't I c'd shoot it out with him without runnin' into the Stranglers' noose for a cold-turkey killin'."

"Yo' sure broke his nerve," Eber Hicks, another of Alf's friends, praised, shouldering

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forward. "Brader, he sure was a killer—till you came. Now he's a——"

Hicks' gesture of disgust was eloquent of his opinion of the man who had sunk to the level of Brader.

Then, presuming upon his standing with Simes, he asked in a confidential tone:

"When yo' goin' t' force Brader t' make his break again, Alf? Goin' t' let him dreen along a while yit——"

"I knew a man once," and Simes spat judgmatically, "that ast too many fool questions——"

"Oh, I didn't mean, Alf—" backing away as Simes' right hand strayed over to his left hip to touch the butt of his lethal gun—"Oh, I didn't mean t' horn into yo'r game."

"Then don't, tha's all."

Alf turned away from them shortly and went to begin some work on his own neglected claim up the gulch. Harpen Jack came out to join the group before the joint, and in the killer's absence the camp gossips went over anew the incidents of the feud between Simes and Brader.

"Brader'll git him some day," Harpen Jack prophesied. "A prairie-dog'll bite ef yo' stick yo' hand into his hole——"

"But not a rabbit," Turner derided.

"No, not none," Turner agreed.

"Say, Harpen, if 't wasn't for th' Stranglers Alf'd plug Brader without——"

"Th' Stranglers 's got mighty long ears, son," Harpen remarked quietly.

"Yes; since they're o'ganized we're in danger o' gettin' all the inconveniences o' dodderin' snizelization——"

"But you don't notice any gents doin' any cold-turkey shootin' since they was o'ganized——"

"Not any," Hicks confirmed.

"They better not," steadily.

SIMES lounged up-gulch. As he passed different claims men called to him with studied politeness. Simes was known to be surly, a real killer, given to fits of sulkiness and knowing the need for continued terrorism if he were to keep up his reputation for success in gun-fighting. There had been no one to dispute his claim to being the raw camp's bad-man since he had shot Brader into submission.

Simes paused under the shoulder of rock that sheltered Brader's shack and claim. Brader came out furtively. Simes scowled at him.

"Wantta get action?"

"No; say, Simes, what's the use us keepin' up this war?" Brader began tentatively. "I'm over bein' mean. I don't want no more trouble.——"

"Yu're right on that, Brader. Chaw a bone."

"All ri'," meekly. "I'm not lookin' f'r trouble, I say."

"I'll finish yo' off some day," said Simes acidly, "when it's ripe t' do it. What're yo' anyways? Nawthin' but a jack-rabbit chewin' all the time——"

"I hafta chew—my jaw wabbles. Yo' broke me, Simes," pitifully. "I own it. Don't keep rubbin' it in before th' boys——"

"Nerve clean, plumb gone, eh?" bitingly. "Aw, what yo' wantta live f'r, then? We're both 'bout forty, Brader, but yo'r days 're short."

Simes turned away, disregarding the chance of getting a bullet in the back. Brader's nerve indeed was gone. He half reached for a gun; then let his hand drop. It was shaking like a leaf as he did it. His shoulders sagged; his chin waggled as he munched his quid.

IN MID-AFTERNOON a few days later a man came down-gulch toward the town. He was running spryly. His smiles showed through the ragged whiskers. His eyes were alight. He called as he came—

"Boys, I've struck it—big!"

It was Pete Brader. In his hand he had the proofs—samples of ore, showing flecks of wire-gold.

The men poured out of the town's resorts to comment and offer congratulations. Brader was in the full tide of public favor when a shadow seemed to darken the rejoicing. It was as when a hawk's form cuts in between the sun and a flock of valley quail and they stop their calling and run for cover.

Alf Simes shouldered through the press:

"You struck it, eh? Well, it won't do yo' any good."

Then he went on, leaving a zone of silence behind him.

Brader seemed to shrink inside his shell again. His shoulders drooped; his eyes lost their light. But he clutched fast to the samples, and after a time the hum of comment revived his spirits and he drew the crowd after him to celebrate. Yet as he

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celebrated there was a flaw in the occasion; for ever he gazed over his shoulder and fear was in his eyes. For he could not keep from mind the threats of Alf Simes to "finish it some day—finish it when it's ripe t' do it."

"If I had my nerve back—" he found himself wishing as he awoke next morning with a dull realization that there had been a big night.

He was in his shack, and he pulled himself together and took stock of himself. He meant to try to get capital in Tucson to help him develop. He did not doubt that, with his samples, his clear title and the camp's location so close to the new railroad, he would be able to sell a half-interest for a good figure. Harpen Jack had counseled with him shrewdly, for Jack had grub-staked Brader and wanted him to come out on top, so Jack's grub-stake money would flow back into his till with goodly interest.

IT WAS two weeks later that Harpen Jack read his letter from Brader, the first that had come since Brader had gone to Tucson. The men were gathered in the shade of the faro-joint, under the gallery, looking over the mail the half-breed mail rider had brought in. They all listened as Jack read:

"DEAR JACK:

"Things coming fine and dandy. Got money-men interested. Got an advance payment. Coming up next week to show them around. They'll be along afterward. I'll want lots of grub put in the shack. Do it for me, or have the boys. *Adios*. P. BRADER.

"P. S.—I'm married. Ask the boys please not to run no blazers. They'll understand.

"P. S. 2. She's been bean-shooter in a quick-draw eating-joint here. She's small, but spry. So no blazers, boys."

Harpen glanced about significantly. Simes, from the crowd's edge, guffawed loudly.

"No blazers, eh?" Simes chortled.

"Say, Simes, let up on Brader," Harpen began.

A low growl of approval showed that this sentiment was popular. Simes, catching it, did not reply nor make his customary threat. Instead he turned on his heel and walked off.

BRADER and his wife, a small woman evidently of fair age, got off the stage a week later. It was toward evening. The stage was late, and Brader, after a few hurried words to Harpen and some others he knew well, took his bride's arm and led her away. The fleeting introductory scene had given the men a small idea of the woman, who was the first to come to camp, aside from the dance-hall habitués and others lower still in social standing. The men had respected Brader's plea for "no blazers," and as Simes had not been present, the home-coming of Brader and his bride had passed off smoothly.

Brader was well dressed, and had had a shave and haircut. His meekness seemed intensified from his married experience.

But that night Simes was in town early—surly again. He heard from Turner of Brader's arrival and laughed meanly.

"We oughtta at least give him a *charivari* party," he suggested; "call on him casual-like, and raise rim."

"Might be somethin' in that," Turner agreed, just exhilarated enough for any wild escapade.

"Sure is," Hicks chimed in. "We c'd horn him an' make th' bride nervous."

"She's 'nother jack-rabbit, like Pete," another man put in, "little an' shrinkin'."

"He wouldn't have guts t' rope a real spunky maverick; bet she's a widder—mebbe grass," Simes sneered.

"No, not none," from Hicks.

"Let's go up an' horn him," Simes returned to his project; "reg'lar old fashion *charivari* party——"

"Whoopee-e-e-e!" from several.

In a moment the faro-joint was deserted as the roisterers streamed off up-gulch toward Brader's shack.

Harpen Jack, hoping to turn aside the merrymakers from possible evil courses by his presence, went along. But it was the camp's worst elements that responded to Simes' invitation, and so Harpen found himself almost alone of all the camp's more staid citizens as the jostling, clamorous crowd left on its mischief-making expedition.

It was a signal-shot from Simes that set off the fusilade that let the Braders know they were the objects of public attention. Shots stuttered through the gloom; bullets thudded into the roof of the Brader shack, the *ping* of lead into tin-can shingling adding to the din. Some one had dug up an old bell and was ringing it; a dozen whanged on frying pans and pail-bottoms.

The door remained shut for a few moments, then opened; and a man shambled

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out, standing out clearly against the door-frame as the light from within limned him forth.

"Boys," Brader began quaveringly, "it's all ri'; th' treat's on us—wait an' I'll come down t' town an' we'll have a snifter f'r old time's sake. It sure is nice o' you all t' be neighborly thisaway——"

"Aw, shet up; chaw a bone."

And Simes shouldered through the crowd.

Silence now, as men edged back. Simes towered up, an ominous figure. His hand was on his gun-butt. The ray of light that sifted past Brader glinted on the rattler-like jaws of the killer. Brader's shoulders, slouched down inside the "store-clothes" he had worn on his home-coming, seemed weaker than ever. His jaw waggled as he mouthed his quid.

"Simes," he pleaded, "I don't want no trouble——"

"I said I'd wait till yo' was ripe," Simes grated. "Yo're ripe, now—rich, just married. Draw, —— yo'!"

"Simes," Brader whined anew.

"Trot out th' bride f'r us all t' see. Ain't there a thing I c'n say 't will rile yo'?"

The crowd edged back, sensing that Simes was keyed to the breaking-point and meant to kill. No one wanted to be in the line of fire or to face him if his guns were once out.

"Trot out th' cussed, bloomin' bride—so she c'n see yo' get it——"

So Simes snarled, lurching forward.

Brader seemed to shrink; he half-turned, when——

"Peeter!"

A steady, firm woman's voice came out to them over the nerveless one's shoulder.

Simes growled, spat, let drip an acid-like oath.

"*Peeter!*"

Again the woman spoke.

The crowd shifted about; men breathed deeply.

"Trot her out f'r th' camp t' see——"

"*Peeter, do I have to say it again?*"

Simes tensed as Brader stiffened. His hand flew to perform its lethal office, but more speedy still was the draw of Brader. Crash on crash of flaming guns, two men staggering, falling—

The crowd surged in.

"Simes is drilled, plumb center," Hicks announced, pointing to the prone form of the killer who would never rise again.

THE WOMAN came out, shoving men aside with the energy of a mate anxious for its own. Brader staggered up, saying:

"Only a crease on my fool haid. Yo' men b'ar witness I had to shoot in self-defense."

"Which yo' sure did," Turner affirmed. "Y're plumb justified, if ever a man was."

"Yes, but how'd yo' come t' get yo'r nerve so sudden?" Harpen asked as Mrs. Brader was drawing Brader inside to bandage his wound.

She stood a moment and glanced back at them all contemptuously. The light struck fair on her features, which they saw then for the first time.

A face seamed by years, homely, capable, firm, eyes wide-set, brow high, chin square, like a granite rock for firmness.

"Yo' didn't s'pose I was a-goin' t' be able t' face my woman if I let him run that blazer, did yo'?" Peter called back.

"Yo' shet up an' c'm in an' lemme tie a rag on yo' skelp," she snapped. "The rest o' yo' pin-feathered ducklin's gowan down-town an' p'isen yo'selves with more bad licker, at our expense. Bury that carrion out thar so't won't p'isen th' buzzards. Git, now, *poco tiempo*."

"By Godfrey th' Paladin, we better go; th' camp's got a new boss," Harpen Jack whispered as the door slammed.

And they went.

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In Kaffir Kraals*

By Santie Sabalala

A WITCH—And UPINA becomes A MAN

A Remarkable Account of Actual Savage Life Told by a Zulu Who Lived It.

EDITOR'S NOTE—Since white men first penetrated the Black Continent there has been a constant struggle to understand the soul and psychology of the savage—to learn something of his ideals; his secret reactions to emotions, such as suspicion, rage, hunger, ambition, love; his instincts in the jungle; his apprehension of death; his animal lust for butchery in battle; his seeming callousness to pain; his extraordinary superstitions and occult powers. . . . Hitherto the best that has been done was in H. H. Johnston's "History of a Slave," strung second-hand on tales told him by a Mohammedan converted from savagery. But here at last we have the curtain plainly lifted!

Santie Sabalala, a pure-blooded Fingo-Zulu, of the race that brought forth Lobengula and Chaka, the most terrible leaders of savages of whom we have any record, has boldly bared the soul of the savage. Santie Sabalala, who was taught by a friendly white man, gives an account that has no single hint of the influence of civilization or religion. It is pure savagery told by an extremely intelligent man who has come out of the kraals without forgetting anything that was magnificent, strange, horrible, or funny in the life of his own people.

His style of writing is unusually good. The scenes he portrays are extraordinarily vivid—and terrible. And altogether we believe he contributes a remarkable chapter—more absorbing than fiction—to the history of man. While the portrayal of savage life from birth to settled maturity extends through six articles, each of these articles is a complete picture in itself. This is the third of the pictures.

THE morning came and the boys got up and tried to stretch themselves. In the drizzling rain all three looked gray with cold, their teeth still chattering. Umtabala stuttered the query—

"*Siya koduga nam hlanje?*—Do we go back today?" The other two nodded in reply.

They made their way cautiously to where the herd was and found some of the cattle dead and a few of the sheep, but not many of the goats. It is proverbial that a goat will stand anything.

Mazalen exclaimed—

"*Izi kumbo?*—The hides?" Upina only glared and so he said no more. They drove the herd toward the kraal, calling their favorites by name—

* *This is an Off-the-Trail Article. See first contents page.*

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"Wena ma Simin, Neke Parda li Futsane, hambanu, hambanu!" And so slowly over the slippery *veld*. They saw the large *ama xuxu* (frogs) which are four times as large as those in the civilized countries, though there are the smaller varieties, too. The larger ones live in holes on the *veld* and are not to be seen except during the rainy season.

They are venomous, as they will spit at any one who comes too near them, and should this effluvia touch the hand it leaves a mark not unlike a burn; and if it should reach the eye, it is lost.

The frog-toad, for it looks like both these reptiles, never makes any noise except perhaps when an ox steps on it by chance. Its habit is rather like the bear in that it will eat a great deal and hibernate, or, rather, become torpid during all the Summer or hot months.

Half-way to the kraal they were met by a band of *Aba fan* (young warriors) with their *bayis* over their heads and wrapped tightly around them. They demanded right away as to how many head of cattle had been lost and killed by the storm; how many sheep and how many goats; and whereabout they were to be found. Having received the desired information, they set out to go and carve the dead cattle, sheep and goats, but they did not offer any of their *bayis* to the small boys as they shivered in the rain, for they were *abafana* and their very bearing bore this out as they swaggered off on their errand of economy.

The herd topped the hill or *qina* that overlooked the village and disappeared suddenly as it trotted down the incline. The dogs in the kraal welcomed it back with much barking. Children hopped out of different huts, clapping their hands. Shrill voices from within those huts called them back and they were obeyed—a native child would never dare disobey an elder, for, if it did, it would be knocked down unconscious. In this way children learn never to talk back, for to do so is certain death.

The herd trotted into the *sibayi*. Women came out of the many different huts. When only three boys entered the only opening into the village, the mothers of the other two whimpered and asked—

"Mba pina amanye?—Where are the others?"

Upina answered them in a matter-of-fact way:

"O omnye ushe wafa, omnye saske sa fumana inkloko yake qa, ndi ya kolwa uteya zi ngonyuma—One of them we found dead, and of the other we just found his head. It must have been that the lions ate him up."

The surrounding group of women put their hands to their mouths and shook their heads, murmuring:

"Kini sisi mango mbetu, si za Kupela pena?—Well, now, is it not strange? Where are we going to end at?"

The mothers of the two boys lunged at Upina. He skipped aside, even as they shrilled—

"U ya xoka, u yu xoka mntana, ndini.—You are lying, you are lying, you child."

The other women remonstrated with them, saying—

"Hayi, wetu kini ngum mntana lo.—Why, no, he is only a child." They struggled with them out there in the wet until a gruff voice demanded to know why it was that *Inkohla* (council of men) should be disturbed by women. He told them—

"Ngenani azi ndhlini zenu ne tull inxolo yenu.—Begone into your huts and quiet your noise." And they went without a murmur.

The women would not suffer that Upina and his two companions should go to the hut that was set aside specially for boys, but led them into the nearest one, and then, being women, they were wise in their ways, for they set a large wooden dish, which had been carved out of a solid piece, before the boys, filled it up with *nkobe* and *amasi* (boiled shelled corn and sour milk) and bade the boys to *iteya*, which they right royally did, as they had had nothing to eat since late noon of the day before.

From ashy gray their hides turned to their normal color of light bronze; the prickly goosey flesh induced by the cold disappeared in the warmth of the fire; and their little stomachs from being flat became normal—that is round and full—which is a peculiarity of all native children. It is not a deformity, for a little later as they grow up they lose this obese appearance.

As they did not have spoons or any other kind of polite eating articles they ate with their hands. Cupping them, they dipped or scooped up the food and carried it to the mouth. Mazalen was guilty of *panga*, that is, eating faster than the other two. At first they glared at him but he took no

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notice, so they in turn began to *panga.* Some of the *nkobe* went down the wrong pipe in Upina's throat. He sneezed, grunted, and coughed out the whole mouthful, spreading the *nkobes* and bathing his two companions, and some of it fell into the dish.

In a fury the other two each took a handful out of the dish and threw all at Upina's face. Mazalen picked up the dish and brought it down on Upina's head. There was a dull gong-like sound as it came in contact with his skull. The *amasi* slopped all over his shoulders and back. Upina jumped up with his head lowered and butted Mazalen in the stomach. Mazalen gasped and fought for air with his mouth open, his two hands on the middle of his stomach.

The women rushed over, exclaiming: "*Kini kwaaku! Abantwana mbaya kataza.*—Well! My! These children are very bothersome" and stopped the fight, although the feelings of each individual were rather high. There were undertone mutterings to the effect that the whole thing would be settled some time in the near future. Upina's mother commanded him to sit down near her and she was obeyed; then the mothers of the two dead boys questioned them.

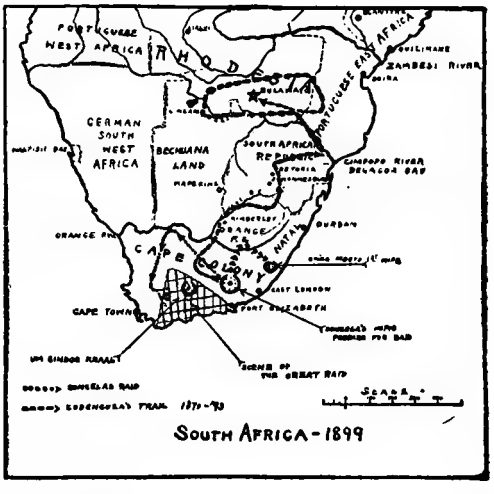
THEY told of how they had discovered the first boy dead in the cave hole. No, he had not been bitten by any *inyoka* nor stung by *u no dudanana* (tarantula) but simply died, *e file.* They told how they came upon the skull of the second boy with the nose licked off.

Yes, he must have been eaten by an *ingonyama* in the night, for the *ingonyama* always eat up every part of a man except his *qekere,* as that is too hard for him. No, they had heard nothing. The mother of the boy who had died of exposure rocked herself to and fro saying over and over again—

"*Ewe, mbe li tshila I qui gakazi laka um mbulala umtana wam.*—Yes, the witch-doctor swore she would kill my child." The mother of the other boy, eaten by the lion, sighed and merely said in a horror-stricken voice:

"I knew something dreadful would happen, for my shadow has been walking separately from me these past days; some one has cast a spell on me."

There was an oppressive silence in the hut and the three boys stole out as soon as they could and ran to the hut that was for boys only. They burst into the low opening which served as a door. The hut was full of smoke; there being no chimney the smoke had to go through the door. A civilized person passing by just then would have thought that the hut was on fire, yet the reason was simple. It was near the rainy season and in the boys' hut they were



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not allowed to burn wood but had to be content with *ubu longwe* (cow dung), which they had to gather, dry, and store away for their own use.

The commodity is not of a very combustible nature unless very very dry. In this instance it was quite evident that it was not very very dry; hence the smoke. The noise inside was deafening, for there were at least sixty boys where there ought to have been forty, and each and every individual was talking at the top of his voice. The smoke did not bother them, for they were all sitting down or lying on their side and the smoke went over their heads. The three returned boys shouted the time-worn greeting—

"*I tshoni mba fondini.*—Say it, men." An instantaneous silence, and then queries from all over the hut:

"*Ni go mbanina? Ama gama wenu? Ngu mbani?*—Who are you? Your names? Who is it?"

"*Siti abe lusi.*—We, the cattle herders," they answered.

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The hut shook to its poor foundation as they were welcomed with a shout.

"*Zowka! Zowka! Izani, si ya vuya uku ni mobona, setaya ama qasu-zowka, zowka* (*zowka* is a kind of huzza or hurray).—Come on, we are glad to see you. We are eating pop-corn." For the natives know how to pop corn. They use a three-legged iron vessel instead of the modern complicated mechanical device that is so popular in America, as they know of no other way to pop their corn. It becomes a game with the boys as to who can guess the most times whether the next pop ear will be *inkuzi* (a male) or *imazi* (female).

A male is an ear that pops white all over; the brownies or half-popped ears are females. The game is very exciting because of its uncertainty, and a native is a real sport in the highest sense of the word. Missing the other two, the whole hut wanted to know what had become of them.

"*Si xeleleni indaba zenu.*—Tell us your adventures." Upina started. Mazalen told him to be quiet. Upina took no notice of him but went on with the story of their adventures and with that wonderful power to fascinate that the native has inborn, he held them spellbound even to Umtabala and the rather disgruntled and sulking Mazalen, until a deep voice at the door said—

"*Aba mba sengayo maba yoku senga maba mxamise'kuza kuba sebu suku.*—Those who are to milk the cows, let them milk and hasten, for it will soon be night." The milkers sorted themselves out and went out to milk the cattle. Some one exclaimed—

"*Yo asi katyi.*—We have not eaten." So two or three went out to see what they were to have to eat.

Two of them came back with a large three-legged iron vessel between them. They staggered inside the hut with it, their eyes large with anticipation as they informed the others who crowded around them that it contained *inyama nom hluzi*—meat and soup. They set the vessel down and went out to get another. As they went out two more boys brought in another vessel, steaming hot. The other two returned a few moments later bearing the third vessel and carrying *isikaff* (native bread) under their unengaged arms. The native, whatever his faults, will not allow his children to go to sleep hungry.

THE rain had stopped for a little while, as it does near sundown, but it was as dark outside as it was inside except for the light of the dung fire. The boys sopped their *isikaff* into the soup and leaned back as they held the bread above their mouths and let the soup drip out of it into the open orifice. They smacked their lips as they enjoyed the meal, speaking with their mouths full, very much like other boys. When the soup had become a bit cooled they dipped their unwashed hands in the pot and fished around for some morsels of meat. A shrill voice called for some of the pot carriers. They dashed out at break-neck speed and as they came back they shouted—

"*Inyama, inyama.*—Meat, meat." The boys choked the doorway as they tried to get out all at once. An *umfan* passing by threatened to give the meat to the dogs unless the whole lot got away from the door. This had the desired effect. The meat was brought inside and every one of the boys ate his fill. Some remarked that they were glad that the rain had come and killed some of the cattle so that they could have some meat, as they were tired of eating *inkobe na masi*, but the majority were too full to pay any attention to this and some one started to tell a story.

The natives are very fond of legends and stories and listened to it with rapt attention. After it was over the usual questions were put to the story-teller that are always put story-tellers the world o'er. By this time some were ready for sleeping and others were already in the land where the *um silikayi* sends them. Those awake laid out their sleeping mats, covered themselves with the few hides that constituted their wardrobes and went promptly to sleep. The rain had begun again and it beat a steady rhythm against the mud wall and the thatched roof.

There was a sound of water bubble-bubbling as a stream formed. A human-like cough came from one of the goats. A form blotted the outer light in the doorway which the boys had not closed. The white-light spray that goes with the African rain at night made the figure stand out indistinctly yet visibly. It stood for a long moment with chin held by the thumb and index finger of the right hand, the palm of the left supporting the elbow of the right, and then spoke in a strong, resonant voice:

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"Yi vani noke apa lowo otye umbona mbu mbiweyo ama zinyo wake aya ku puma.—Listen, all you here. He who ate and stole the corn from the field, his teeth will fall out."

The boys stirred in their sleep, the form stood a while and then walked out slowly with the noise of stiffened feathers rubbing against a hard surface. It began to rain harder. There was the sound of dripping water inside the hut as a leak started in the well-thatched roof. The boys slept on, their different tuned snores filling the darkness of the hut.

THAT morning there was a great flashing of pearly teeth and rolling of brown eyes as a dozen or so brown, naked little boys and girls pattered their way in the slow-falling rain as they made for a certain hut. They bore themselves with a very important air, for they were going to *mpeza*, and each little person was sure he or she would be able to excel the others in the exhibition to be held.

As they trooped into the hut each individual was greeted by the different older boys and girls already there assembled, some of the boys by the favorite native greetings among younger people: *"Izapa buut.*—Come here, brother Wena," *"Mtaka bawo.*—You, child of the father," and the little girls by *"O wetu nga neno.*—O dearest, this way," *"Kin! Vali temba lam.*—Why, there is my promised one."

There ensued a lot of good-natured rough and tumble as these comparative infants were tossed from one to another or playfully spanked. Some played "fighting goats," butting each other's heads. Two or three women entered and called out the names of their children. When they had responded to the summons they were made to stand near the center and told to *mpeza*.

Very solemnly a small boy lifted his foot and brought it down steadily. His mother stopped him and illustrated to him just what he was to do, and that was to lift the heel clear of the ground keeping his toes down and bring the heel down smartly. He essayed to do it. The first time he did not do so well. The mother showed him again; and, as he attempted the second time, she clapped her hands to keep him in time and give him a rhythm to go by, stamping her own right foot gently too.

The little fellow did well up until the fourth stamp. He lost his balance. The other children jeered and fussed him, shouting—

"Uxnilile, uxnilile, uxnilile.—He is drunk, he is drunk, he is drunk."

Childish tears came into his eyes and a sniffle or two. His mother did not seemingly notice these signs of mortification and bade him try again. He tried but did not keep time with her. She gave him a box on the ear and caught him on the other side with another. He immediately *mpezad* in the approved way, for he trotted rapidly in one place and put his two fists up to his eyes and bawled like a dying goat.

The other children yelled with delight and imitated his crying as it varied into different tones and octaves. His mother in disgust left him standing there to come back later. Two little girls, a little way off, were learning how to *qata*, that is, how to knock their ankle-bones and yet keep time with the vocal music.

There are two ways of doing *qata;* one is standing tiptoe and bringing the heels together so as to make the ankle-bones meet. It takes a certain amount of good judgment in order to bring the heels together with just sufficient force, for if they are brought together hard the result is painful and the person collapses to the ground. However, the natives are able to do it after a certain amount of practise. The other way is to stand with one foot tiptoe and bring the toes of the other smartly against the ankle-bone or just below it. This style is called *sonka so tutu* (bread of ashes) because bread baked under ashes makes a noise similar to this when being "patted off" to get rid of the ash dust.

The mother of the girls kept time by clapping her hands, humming a tune and encouraging them now and then by exclaiming—

"Heka, heka, mba ntwana mbam.—That's right, that's right, children of mine." Other mothers trooped in to the hut and other little boys and girls *mpeza*. Lisping mouths all over the hut kept themselves in time by repeating over and over again the meaningless yet important, *"Shi-tse, shi-tse, shi-tse."* In time the whole group of those young ones learning to dance, for that's what they were up to, though only the first steps, as it were, caught the rhythm.

The few men gathered sat around impassively, but by and by they succumbed to the atmosphere and found themselves

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thudding their heels and singing under their breath. An excited voice outside shrieked:

"Yu, yu, yal Kani zaku mbona; um tana ka mandlha; une zote, ama zinyo wake a ya wa.—My, my, my! Come and see Strong-man's child; his teeth are falling out."

THE women poured out of the hut, crying out—

"Upina, Upina?—Where is he, where is he?"

"Jika emvakme, endhlu.—Turn round behind the hut."

Around the hut they went and there beheld a very frightened little boy of about seven years of age spitting out teeth without any trace of blood on them. The women grouped around him, their eyes bulging as he stooped over spitting out two and three teeth at a time. A scream resounded suddenly in the air some distance away. It rapidly came nearer and nearer and suddenly burst on the ground surrounding the boy. A woman thrust aside two of those gazing on the spitting boy and grasping him by his two arms commanded him to—

"Vula, vula um lumo wako ndi mbone.—Open, open your mouth and let me see." He opened his mouth and all his upper teeth were gone. There remained only a red rim not unlike the gums of an old man who has reached his dotage and has not long to live. So did Mandlhas' child's gums look.

The woman gasped once or twice when the boy opened his mouth and murmured in a frightened whisper—

"A kuho neto le pezulu." The other women fell over each other in their effort to get away from *lumntu o takatiweyo*—a person who has been bewitched. The boy stood there with his mouth open to the sky. His eyes starting from his head, looking somehow or other like a frog. He made a choking noise and wrenched himself away and spat out another tooth that had almost choked him. The woman stared at him terror-stricken, and then asked him—

"Uxnelile?—Have you told?" He shook his head even as he spat another tooth; then several in quick succession. *"Nxana u qibleleyo iza emzini wam yeva?*—When you are finished, come to the hut, do you hear?" she charged him.

The boy nodded miserably and the woman left him with very heavy-laden steps. A little while after the boy had spat out the last of his set of teeth. He looked at them curiously and, picking them all up in his two hands, he turned his back toward the hut, stooped over and repeated the age-old plea for new teeth:

"Makulu, makulu, nakonga ama zinyo wam wa tate mdpe awako a qinileyo naga a wam ndipe a wako.—Grandmother, grandmother, here are my teeth; give me yours; these are new, yours are old and hard. Take mine, give me yours." And with that he flung one handful between his legs up toward the top of the hut and repeated with the other handful. Some of them reached the top, others fell short. All native children do this when they are "changing" teeth, for there is a belief among them that if one throws his or her teeth on top of the hut they will fall into the mouth of the invisible grandmother who will be willing to change her old teeth for these new ones so as to keep her set perpetually new.

Those falling on the top of the roof will be renewed the soonest, that is, grow. Those that have fallen on the ground will take longer, for *makulu* is old and has to climb down and pick them up before she will give her own in exchange, and that is why some people never get their wisdom teeth till they are very very old, for grandmother has just found them.

Having performed this very important ceremony in connection with his teeth, the boy started out in a very roundabout way for the woman's hut. He did not want to be seen by any one, as he thought that possibly his recent deficiency might be noticed by his companions. Also he was very very frightened. It could almost be said panic-stricken. It was only his native stoicism that kept him from giving way to the terror he felt.

No one saw him, and he arrived at the hut to find the woman with her head in a vessel of water. For a long, long time she kept her head inside the vessel of water until the boy became uneasy and then she lifted her head slowly, water dripping from her head down her face. She took a deep breath and then said:

"Mpundulu ukona? Mpu-dulu?—Are you there?" The boy shrank back, his eyes filled with fear. She turned in the direction from which the noise came and said eagerly—

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"*Ukona?*—You are here?" The boy muttered timidly—

"*Haya, ndim.*—No, it is I." The woman brushed the water from her eyes and in a voice full of remorse demanded:

"*Ufuna ntoni apa? Ndi xelele kam sinyane.*—What do you want here? Tell me quickly." The boy stammered—

"*Mute mandi ze apa.*—You told me to come here." Mollified, the woman answered:

Ewe, mindi tshelo.—Yes, I did.—*Mbu pi pezolo?*—Where were you last night?"

"*Enqugwalene lama nkwenkwe.*—In the boys' hut."

"*Uli vile ilizwi le mpundulu?*—Did you hear the voice of the *mpundulu?*"

"*Nid pupe ngalo.*—I dreamed about it."

"*Nyayzzi uku mba mbindi zenga ntoni ngoku?*—Do you know what I was doing just now?"

"*Ewe, mbu lindela el mpundulu.*—Yes, waiting for the *mpundulu.*"

The *mpundulu* is a spirit that can either be used by the witch-doctor, or a person who is able to throw spells on other people. The witch-doctor being what he is, is master of all corporeal forms of things. A person who has been able to learn how to throw spells is only half way into the world of spirits. The woman, with her face in a vessel full of water, was trying to get into the mood and develop the "eye" sense of the evil spirit world. Unless one is able to keep the head in some water the *mpundulu* can not be seen in broad daylight.

The common people—that is, those who do not know how to throw spells—may hear it in the daytime but not see it. The only time that they might be able to see it and then indistinctly, is at night time. However, it is more by the sound of it than by seeing it that any one knows when it is around except by the sound of ruffled feathers as it swings its arms to and fro in walking. The *mpundulu* is covered all over with feathers even to its head, and has a beaked nose, clawlike fingers and human-shaped feet. No man ever has one; it is always an "affinity" to some women.

Bidding the boy to hide himself, *Ngase ma kukweni*, by the sleeping mats, which he did unwillingly, the woman once more put her head and face in the water, taking a deep breath before doing so. There was the noise of shmow—shmow sh-mow, as of feathers being ruffled, and the woman slowly lifted her face from the vessel, the water dripping down her eyes, nose and mouth, and then off her chin.

"*Ukona?*—Are you there?" she questioned.

"*Ewe, ufuna ntomi ngam.*—Yes, what do you want from me?" was the answer from apparent space.

"*Umtana ka mandlha, une zote ama zinyo wake aya wa—a pelile.*—The child of Strongman has been spelled; his teeth have fallen out; they are all gone."

"*Iya kula ndhlo, uze u tsice emyangweni, kuze I kwekwe leya I zalise I zandhl zayo ngaku tsica, kuze emnakoko I sinde ngapandlha kwe cango.*—Go to that hut (next door) and then spit on the outside of the door, then shall the boy fill his hands with spit and smear it on the outside of the door." Thus answered the *mpundulu.*

"*Kuze kuteni?*—And then what will happen?" she asked.

"*Inyawu salumtu laku qekeka qa.*—The spell will be broken and that person's foot, responsible for the teeth falling out, will crack; that's all." Before the mother could say "*Msulu.*—Thank you," there was a measured noise of ruffled feathers which receded and then died away. The mother called to the boy two or three times but he did not answer her. She got up and went over to the pile of mats and there found him all huddled up in a swoon; the terror of having his teeth suddenly drop out, combined with what he had just witnessed, had been too much for him.

The woman poured some water on him and he revived slowly. He looked at her in a dazed way. She spoke to him.

"*Iza aku komuntu ngoku iza.*—There is no one about now. Come." And she half dragged and half pulled him up and out of the door, and when in front of the other hut she did as she had been directed to do and saw to it that the boy did his part, although in the state he was in he had to do it twice before she was satisfied, after which she and the boy retired to her hut.

LIZWI LKULU—Big Voice—came back from the *kohla* (council) with his five wives, *abafazi*, following him at a respectful distance. He stepped inside the hut, almost bent double in order to avoid the top of the doorway, which was very low, and he very tall. He squatted down on his haunches by the

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fireplace, which was in the center of the hut. His *abafazi* entered and went over to the left, the side where they belonged, and arranged themselves in a semicircle, going down on their knees and then sitting on their feet.

The oldest wife was the only one who did not sit down in that fashion but sat in the same way a tailor does. This she was privileged to do because she was the first wife. The youngest or most recent *umfozi* asked him his wish.

"*Ufuna ntoni?*—What do you want?"

His answer was merely a grunt. And then he spoke:

"*Azazi ne nto le, qa cento esi yazilo lom fazi si quira ebe funi uku takata umzi wam, uske, nge nzazi we tuma ikwekwe yake mayi fumane ubona, lowo O takatiweyo.*—We know nothing definite, only that this woman is a witch and wanted to bewitch this household by presenting the spelled corn, by accident, however. She sent the boy to get some of this corn to roast, and he ate some of it in secret." He went on further—"*Ngomso, si za ku sabalala into eyoku yenbwa ngalom fazi.*—Tomorrow we will decide what kind of punishment shall be meted out to this woman, and when that is done it shall be made known to every one."

On the morrow the *inkohla* met in the main hut of the kraal near the *sibayi*. The men sat on their haunches in a circle around the fire, which was in the middle of the floor. The *abafan* (younger men) sat just outside this circle; at the "head" of the hut, that is, on the other side, facing the door, *Umpakati*, a kind of chamberlain to the king who was there to represent his majesty and hand down whatever decision he had been entrusted with, providing the *kolha* did not or was not able to arrive at any kind of a decision. On his right were two or three petty chiefs and one of royal blood.

To digress for the moment—all children, boys and girls, are legal charges or *abatwana* of the chief or king. He is their *bawo* (father) whether related to him by blood or not. They have a perfect right to call themselves children of the *inkosi* (king) but they can not rule unless the royal line dies out completely, which is next to impossible, as the *inkosi* has more than forty fine *abafazi* in his own village and generally seven or eight children from each.

The native male is a fine specimen of humanity from a physical standpoint, as he stands from five feet ten to six feet six in height, and is broad in proportion. They are big strapping living models, as there are no social disease and its attendant ravages until civilization and civilized men bring it, and, as has been mentioned, the weak are weeded out by being killed at birth. Only the very best are kept to propagate the race.

The *inkosi* has also more wives in the different kraals in the dominion he rules. Some chiefs have more than two hundred and fifty thousand square miles under their rule with kraals dotted all over the country. One can imagine the large household that is his. However, the other wives are nominally his retainers, for when he goes on a journey he rarely takes more than two of his *abafazi*, the oldest and the youngest, the oldest possibly because she will not be left behind and the youngest to wait on the older one, for it is the unwritten law that the most recent wife is servant of all the other wives and the oldest wife has first choice in everything, after her husband has given his permission. Otherwise she is the master of them all.

Sitting on the right-hand side of *umpakati* is the leading *induna*, who seems to radiate his personality, for he is the one who orders the *umkosi* (regular warriors) when they are to go on the warpath or raid. Next to him is *umtongeli mabafan*, a leader of the younger men; and next to him is his friend and adviser. The circle is completed by some *ama doda*—everyday men who are there because the native government, if it may be so called, is democratic and because they in times past have given good *amazwi*—good words.

The *umpakati* spoke—

"*Maku tini nga lenta ma-doda?*—What shall be done about this, men?"

A young man outside the circle spoke—

"*Ndi ti nam.*—I say," and was cut off by the *umpakati*, saying in a terrible voice—

"*Tu la mfan!*—Quiet, young one!" He subsided then and there and never spoke one sentence throughout the whole *kohla*, for he had been called a child when he had just been "made" a man. One of the *ama doda* spoke up and said—

"*Ku tenina sicngayi mbabi le mpundulu?*—Why can not the *mpundulu* be caught?"

The other men glared at him. The *umpakati* in utter scorn remarked—

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"Hi nto mbuke abantu mbankaba ntuwana ngoku?—What, is it that every one has become a child now?" The *indoda* sprang up at this implied insult, swinging his stick in a big arc. Everybody remained seated looking at him impassively. He spoke excitedly.

"Iza guwala ndini iza nda ku mbonisa lom mtana yakuwenza u mbaleke iza.—Come on, you coward, I will show that this child will make you run, come on." The *umpakati* waited until he had finished and then uttered one sentence—

"Pu ma.—Get out." And the man went out without saying another word. The prince of royal blood spoke—

"Intsimbi eshuschu mayi fakwe ehlemben yake lam fazi.—A red-hot piece of steel should be shoved down the woman's throat." The witch-doctor, who was standing beside a post, brushed the suggestion aside by saying—

"Ayi nam sehenzi lonto, nyakum bulala kam sinyane.—That is no good, that will kill her too quickly."

The *induna* on the right-hand side spoke up very slowly as if delivering a sentence of death and he were the king:

"Ndi ti mna so wake maka tsalewe nga nye nga nye ade apele, kuze emvakoko, indhlebe zake zi ng umle aze anga vi nxana impundulu izayo.—I say, let her eye-lashes be plucked out one by one until they are all out and her eyes swell, so she can not see, and her ears be cut, so that she will not be able to hear when the *mpundulu* comes."

THERE was a hum of voices as this decision was given. Again the witch-doctor raised his dissenting voice by asking:

"Uza ku tin ngemi xuma wake? Uku dumba muyaku pela emva koko yahu tina impundulu cinga mfondini.—What are you going to do about the holes? The swelling around the eyes will go away and she will be able to see and hear when the *mpundulu* is coming. Try something else, man."

The *umpakati* turned round toward the post where the witch-doctor was standing and said—

"Utinina wena?—What do you say?" His fiendish eyes lighted up with inward pleasure as he cleared his voice and spoke in a full voice of confidence:

"Naku fumana um godo uum ti nize nim mbope lomfazi kona, emvakoko niwu xome lum godo pezu kwento, naku mbopa ileke ili kulu engalweni yake yase nene, em na kwe ntsuku ezi mbini; na ku gawula lo ngalo yake exalabeni lake.—You get a limb of a tree and tie the woman on it and then hang it high and you will tie a heavy stone to the wrist of her right arm and let it hang down for two days. After two days you will get a battle-ax and chop off her arm at the shoulder." This was thought to be a very good plan and the *kohla* broke up and the men trooped out, the *aba fan* to get the limb of the tree and the older men to tell the king what they had decided on. The *inkosi* had not sat in the *kohla* because no one had been killed and it was a case of *nku takata* (witchcraft) and by tacit understanding the witch-doctor "sits" in these deliberations and the *inkosi* does not.

They trooped into the doorway, but just inside, they dropped to their hands and knees and crawled up to where the *inkosi* was haunched near the fire, his head on his chest, seemingly gazing into the fire—whereas he was watching keenly to see if any of the *kohla* would dare break the rule of coming into his presence in any other position than on his hands and knees. When they were all in he saluted them without lifting his head by saying—

"Itsom, madoda.—Say it, men." And they answered—

"Ewe, bawo.—Yes, father."

"Ipendulo yenu.—Your decision," he demanded. He was informed of it by the *umpakati*. On being told that the witch-doctor had devised this form of punishment he merely replied—

"Mbindi yaz.—I thought so." Then he commanded—

"Myi yenzwe.—Let it be done."

The *induna* departed, called a few strong warriors and went into the hut where the woman was and took charge of her, her husband helping them, even to tying her on the limb of a tree before she was hoisted on two posts over the *sibayi* gate. One arm was bound to the side of her body and the other loose with a heavy stone tied with thong ropes at one end and the other around her wrist. The stone was set in motion as it were a pendulum and the woman a clock. The woman moaned from time to time—

"Asombe ndi pinde, asombe ndi pindi.—I will not do it again." The inhabitants

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of the community looked on with varying expressions on their faces. The children were told to look at the witch-woman. The rain stopped, as it always does just before sunset. The sun strove to shine up in the last few moments that it had, lighting up the whole scene and then sank out of sight. There was that crushing silence that always follows at the setting of the sun when nothing seems to breathe and the whole world is dead.

The spectators around the woman hastened away to their huts with many a backward look; the boys jostled each other in order not to let the other fellow cross his shadow; cheerfully by the side of their wood fires and in the warmth of the hut they ate their evening meal and between huge bites they discussed the punishment meted out to the witch-woman. Most of them expressed the opinion that the punishment was not hard enough; others merely said that the witch-doctor knew what was right and it was the best form of punishment to be meted out.

THE third day dawned with the rain coming down steadily and strong. There were many huts flooded, and venturesome small children were swept off their feet and washed into the thorn fence that surrounded the kraal and were dragged out with many painful scratches if any one happened to see them at the time. Others, caught in some bigger angry boiling stream, were swept away never to be heard of or seen again.

The women were busy trying to keep the older worn-out huts weatherproof. The men sat in the big *ngugwala* smoking and drinking their native beer and telling of their different adventures. There were arguments and quarrels. Those who were foolish enough to try to resort to physical means were promptly put out and not allowed inside for a *yanga* or moon.

The leading *induna* reminded the crowd that this was the day that the witch-woman was to be taken down and her arm, weighted down with the stone, chopped off. With many cracking of bones as they stretched themselves the men ambled out of the great hut wrapping their *infele* hide robes around them as they went to view the *quirakas*. Several of the warriors took the body of the woman down.

Because of her natural vitality she was still alive, although she had been exposed to the inclement weather for three days and nights without any food or water. The thongs had eaten into her flesh and blood was streaming at every point where she was tied by it. A battle-ax in the hands of one of the stalwart warriors swung in a great arc and descended down on the woman's shoulder just above the arm joint and cut it clean in two.

A spasmodic shudder ran all over the woman's body. The *inkosi* looked around at his retainers and *indunas* and others and demanded, with grim humor—

"*Ngu bani um funa yo?*—Who wants her?" No one answered him. "*Akanam sebenzi hambani nim lahle e manzini a qita paya a sangweni.*—She is no good for any one else; go and throw her out into that water that is passing so swiftly by the gate."

They picked her up and walked over to the gate, slipping often with the mud and water under their feet. Arrived there the warriors gave the body a big swing and let go. The body sailed in the air, then fell with a splash in the rushing waters. It floated for a time, disappeared, then appeared and then was lost to sight for all time as both log and woman were carried by the water down a hill that had become a waterfall.

The men played about the water like little children, paddling at the seashore. There was a great hilarious shout as the *inkosi* lost his footing and fell with a great splash in the shallow water, where they happened to be at the time.

Several of his warriors rushed forward to help him up, but he had gained his feet before they reached him. He strode homeward as fast as the slippery ground would allow him but stopped in amazement as he watched the witch-doctor coming toward him and eating an *incuba* (wild potato), for *incuba* had ceased to grow two moons back. The witch-doctor seeing the expression on the *inkosi's* face, asked him if he would like one—like it right away. The king would have liked to refuse, for of all men in the world he feared the witch-doctor, but he looked into those compelling eyes and as the *inyoka* charms a mouse so was he charmed by the witch-doctor.

He said yes, and the witch-doctor, pulling up his sleeve, with his hand thrust into

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the dirty boiling water underfoot, brought up a good-sized *incuba* that was dry in spots. He thrust it into the hand of the *inkosi* and commanded him to *etya* (eat), and the *inkosi* took a doubtful bite at first, then a bigger one, and put the whole vegetable in his mouth at the last, chewing it with great relish.

"*U ya funa enye?*—Do you want another one?" the witch-doctor asked him. The king nodded his head vigorously, for his mouth was too full for him to speak. The witch doctor dipped down into the muddy waters again three times in succession and brought up an *incuba* every time. The royal court stood around gazing on with wonder, their mouths watering; but the king ate all of the *incubas* except the last one, which he bit in two. The half in his mouth he took out and tossed over to his *umpakati.*

This tossing out of the mouth the bit that has just been bitten is a native habit; the reason is to give the other men so much of your saliva so he will not be able to cast a complete spell on one. No matter how much the article is wiped off there is still a good deal of the first person's "power" still left in it in order to throw the spell back should the other person try to bewitch the first.

They splashed and slipped their way back to the hut, there again to start where they had left off before they had gone about having the woman's arm chopped off and having her thrown into the rushing waters.

It often happens during the planting season that different grades of corn are put in, and just before the corn tops ripen (*tsoba*) and the beard (*indevu*) appears on the corn, those who are to harvest the corn, the girls and boys, are told off to the different fields that are allotted to them.

Those who can afford it buy medicine from the witch-doctor to make them a good crop to keep the bad spirits away, and, if it is a small field, to put a curse on any one else who should steal the corn. The woman just thrown away had cursed or spelled the corn after it had been harvested and in the *selwa* where it and all other grains are kept. This is a large hole dug in the center of the cattle kraal and closed down or covered over with a grass basket door, and the grain or corn is taken out from time to time. This granary is placed where it is for safety, so in case of a raid the raiders will have quite a lot of difficulty before they are able to secure whatever is stored there.

As it happened the boy had been sent by her into the *selwa* and had brought up some corn which she had *tuka* by looking at it hard and mumbling something over it. Before sending the boy down with the basket again she had taken a cob of it with her in order to be able to concentrate on it day by day. The boy had come out, placed the woven wicker basket cover over the opening, kicked some cow and sheep dung over it and went his way with a cob of corn under his armpit which he had taken out of the basket when he went down, unknown to the woman, it being covered by his *bayi.*

She was unable to guess that he had stolen any of the cursed corn.

While the other boys were popping corn he had roasted his and eaten it on the quiet on the evening of Upina's and his other two companions' return. The *mpundulu* had appeared in the night to warn whoever it was what would would happen to those who had eaten the cursed corn. As to how it came about that the prophecy came true, I leave to those who are able to unravel such a seeming mystery. The power is there. Is it applied by telepathy? Mind power? Or some other medium that is yet unknown? I don't know. As to the witch-doctor, he is even a greater master in things occult and at sleight of hand.

IT WAS *Ehloteyane* (Spring) of another *nyaka* (year) and the men were talking very excitedly over by *e sangweni* (gate), for one of their number had just come back from a short exploration and brought back *u mbanana*, a red flower, which meant that it was time to plow and plant—*uku lima naku kuba.* The argument on one side was that it did not look so bright as at other times and the other side asserted that it was brighter. The *inkosi* emerged from his hut and strode toward the animated group and in a thundering voice informed them—

"*Tulani le nxolo, ni yeka aba fazi nama nkwenkwe mbaye ku lima.*—Cease your noise and let the women and children go and do the planting." It was done even as he had ordered.

The *inkosi* and the group of men walked out of the gate and stood watching a score

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or so of boys of about fourteen and fifteen practising throwing *imikonto* (spears) at *nezi sikaka* (shields made of the hides of oxen) propped up at varying distances. Half a dozen boys were under the care of an *umfana*, who instructed them just how to hold the *imikonto*, what posture to adopt when throwing at different distances and objects and how to give it a certain deadly twist as it leaves the hand in order to make the ugliest wound.

The *mbagala* or beginners had small spears, which would only go a very short distance. They stood about in a circle throwing their spears at a hole in the ground. However, instead of a young *umfan* as their tutor they had an old *ixego* who was very full of life in spite of his advanced age. He talked to them continually, keeping them in good humor despite the monotony of the lessons that they were taking as their initiation into the ranks of the *um kosi om. kulu*.

A little farther on another group, a little bit more advanced, were throwing spears at some *sikakas* (shields) set a dozen feet away. The *sikakas* were old but were still able to "shed" spears. The *umfan* in charge of this group was trying to show his pupils how to hit in the wedges of the *mitya* (strips) that are worked in and out on the face of the *sikaka* that hold spears and afford the owner a grip. He was also teaching them in defense to place the *sikakas* here or there or in the front to block off a stick or a flight of *imikonto* that would pierce a warrior if he didn't do this.

The object of hitting between the strips is to get the spear through the shield where it will reach the owner back of it.

The next group had learned how to hit in the wedges, and the *sikakas* were set quite a distance away. The boys stood with their legs well apart, their muscles rippling up and down their arms. The right arm was brought back, the spear balanced easily between forefinger and thumb, the left elbow crooked gracefully and just slightly, the hand half closed, the whole posture bespeaking a body under full control.

There was a sudden tightening; the body stiffened for an instant and then straightened as the right hand described a half arc and stopped on a line just above the ear, three feet in front of the face, and the spear was let go hurtling through the air to hit a propped up *sikaka* with a sound like klee-zam! The last group was not exactly a group but a band of boys with regular fighting equipment—five feet high *sikakas*, eight feet long *imikonto*, with five boys on each side at a distance of about thirty-five yards.

The tutor stood to one side and the boys crouched behind their enormous *sikakas*. He shouted out—

"*Grombiselane imikonto yenu.*—Start throwing your spears."

They kept continuously by the side of their shields and behind them, for the *sikakas* are made so tall especially for this purpose. They are propped up with extra *imikonto*.

The boys took a start, stepped back, and, with several quick steps forward, leaped into the air, throwing their spears with all the force they could muster, and crouched down quickly. There was a resounding quwam!—quickly echoed by another. They peeped through the wedges that held the spears and tilted their shields at a slant as five spears were seen hurtling through the air from the other side.

The *sikakas* were tilted at an angle; the *imikonto* smashed against them with a loud crash and glanced off harmlessly without penetrating the tough hide. The boys jumped up excitedly and flung their spears at their opponents. There was a loud karrrramb! as the spears hit the *sikakas*. The air became filled with *imikonto*, the steel flashing as the sun's rays caught them in flight. The practise became a sham battle. There were flung back and forth challenges and cries of battle:

"*Iza nazo.*—Come on with them." "*Ni ngawa masana.*—You are only infants." "*Si ngama doda tina.*—We are men, we." "*Itso, itso, granu granu mfanyana.*—Say it, say it! Ra-ra-ra, young men."

Upina in the excitement ran out from his *sikaka* and unmilitarily turned sidewise, exposing himself for a few seconds. An *imikonto* came rushing through the air and buried its sharp point in the thick part of his right arm, turning the three-quarter twist that the thrower had given it as it left his hand. He turned quickly; the ten foot shaft of the *imikonto* dragged and rolled over the ground and made the wound wider. The heated sham fight continued. He tried in vain to extract the *imikonto* off his arm.

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The old man instructing the group stopped in his excited jabbering of urging the boys on as he noticed Upina's plight. He watched him keenly for a space before he went over to have a look at the wound and the *umkonto* embedded therein. The sham battle stopped suddenly and the boys all crowded around the old man and Upina.

The old man put his right hand on his mouth and folded his other arm over his chest and rested his right elbow on the arm and shook his head. The spear had pierced the thick part of the right arm just below the shoulder. The spear was an *um kali* (a sharp) with a sharp prong or hook just behind the head, and an auxiliary spear as it were just behind that.

To "back" the spear out was impossible and to pull it out was equally out of the question as the shaft was covered with copper and brass wire woven on it half the way down and there was no chance of breaking it. Having observed all these things as he stood there with his hand over his mouth, the old man calmly reached down among his few and scanty habiliments, brought out a long wicked looking knife and cut the flesh across the spear. Upina watched the whole proceeding with great and calm interest, never evincing any fear of pain all the while. The old man picked up a handful of dirt and dusted the wound with it, after which Upina made his way back to the *kaya* to go and see the witch-doctor and get some herbs from him for his wound. No sooner had he left than the practise began anew.

IT WAS the height of Summer. The heat was so intense that the air seemed to have been cooked, the heat rays danced up and down like the waves of the sea after a great storm. An old wrinkled woman was asleep, propped up on the shady side of a hut. She was supposed to be looking after the children who were beside the thorn fence on the shady side crawling on their hands and knees, curious about everything. Pouncing on an unsuspecting grasshopper, its young captor in open-eyed wonder watched it kick the air as it tried to get away. A pink-mouthed smile with two teeny weeny teeth just coming through, and the unfortunate grasshopper went into that smile.

Infant curiosity always takes the form of tasting things. There was a beatific smile for a moment as the grasshopper was being masticated; the look changed from one of pleasure to one of pained surprize as the taste of the grasshopper's digestive make-up made itself manifest, for it is known the world over that the grasshopper is the original tobacco-chewer, and mere infants, who have been living on milk and sour milk, have not yet acquired the habit of chewing, not to mention tobacco itself. So the grasshopper came out on the flood of time not quite so lively as it was a few moments before.

A *bungane* (a bumblebug—not bumblebee) went zooming along in the still African air, sounding like a small aeroplane. The shadow of an *ukozi* (chicken hawk) floated slowly over the ground; the speckled native hens (*inkuku*) clucked with fear to their broods and squatted down, spreading their wings in order to shelter and protect them from the winged death overhead.

The shrill voices of some women working in the fields a mile or so away was heard as they caught sight of the first cloud of *inkubi* (locusts) making their way toward the kraal. One of them got on the top of a *qina* (hill) and with her hands on her hips and her chin resting on her chest, she shrilled toward the kraal—

"*Nazi inkubi izani ne nama bayi sizi sizi mbabe kora.*—Here are the locusts; bring some clothing so that we will be able to catch them." The old woman woke up with a start and struggled to her feet and in a cracked voice inquired—

"*Weyil Utinina?*—Hey, what did you say?"

The woman on the hill put her right hand over her mouth and shrilled the message again, patting her mouth rapidly as she did. This is a native habit that is commonly practised in transmitting any kind of message by word of mouth over the great distances. The patting seems to strengthen the vibration of the sound. The old woman again inquired—

"*Weyil Andi naa.*—Hey, I can not hear you," in an impatient voice.

The woman shrilled once more her message. The old woman heard it at last and mumbling to herself, she went toward the back of one of the huts where a group of men were solemnly doing some fancy work with different colored bright berries, running them on pieces of sinew string. She looked over to the eldest man there in order

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to gain permission to speak. He took no notice of her for a few moments but kept her standing. The poor old thing shook her shoulders impatiently and looked around helplessly at the group of men. At last one of them demanded—

"*U funa ntoni?*—What is it that you want?" She replied in a quavering voice—

"*Ku tiwa inkubi zi yeza mba funa ama.*—It is said that the locusts are coming; they want—" They did not let her finish, but seemingly were galvanized into swift action. The whole crowd jumped up and made for the different huts where they had their respective domiciles, diving into the low doors to reappear a second or so later with some sleeping mats under one arm and three or four ears of corn under the other. Some had their skin robes of buck, goat and wild carnivorous animals—leopard, cheetah, meer-cat, *ingada*, *ingvue ngwze*. They confused the old woman and bombarded her with:

"*Ndwani? Nngapi? Kweli pi icula? Xama sukulala.*— Whereabouts? Which way? Which side? Hurry up; don't go to sleep."

The sun became darkened. They looked up and saw the first part of the large cloud of locusts; they raced away to the gate out into the open *taffa* (*veld*). There they spread out their *bayis* (mats and skin robes) and shelled the corn. On finishing they started to fight their way back to the *kaya*.

Those who had sticks put up one arm against their faces and waved their sticks from side to side. At every move scores of locusts were killed as the air was full of them. The sun was blotted out. As they walked they squashed, squashed, squashed over the bodies of hundreds of locusts. Those without sticks folded their arms over their faces and walked on blindly, calling out to the others now and then so as not to lose the direction of the *kaya*. The children came out of the huts and lisped—

"*Inkubi, inkubi.*—Locusts, locusts." From the blazing bright midday sun the day became as the dark before the dawn. The men gained the gate and groped their way into the nearest hut. They were covered with locusts, even their hair on top of their heads, the bark cloth and skin robes that they had wrapped around their loins. The locusts were eagerly plucked off them by the women who happened to be there.

Some were badly kicked by the *inkubis*, for the locust of Africa is much larger than the so-called locust that is seen in the countryside of civilized lands. The leg is covered with a sharp formation seemingly of thorns. The kick is powerful and draws blood, should they happen to be handled by any one. The thigh and leg are very hard to break and it is equally hard to separate the limb from the body; whereas it is a very easy thing to separate a grasshopper's limb from its body.

The heads of the *inkubis* were crushed by the women and as the locusts kicked in their death throes they were tossed into the three-legged iron vessel that stood in the fireplace. Outside there was the constant *purrrrring* of hundreds of thousands of *inkubi* on the wing. Far away in the distance was heard the shrill cry of the women in the fields calling—

"*Izani, izani.*—Come on; come on.—" "*Amo simi aya pela.*—The fields are being eaten away."

The men inside the hut argued as to who should go out and help keep away the *inkubis*. In the end the women were abruptly and pointedly told to "*puma*—get out"—which they did with more speed than grace. They stumbled blindly toward the gate, and, guided by the constant cry for help that came from the far distance they made their way as fast as they could in the flying fog and semi-darkness of the locusts.

Some time later they arrived there to find a score or more women rushing hither and thither with branches of trees in their hands brushing off the locusts that alighted or were in the *um bona nama zimba*, *um Xoxozi njalo*—on the corn, kaffir-corn, and flowering squash. The perspiration teemed off their glistening bodies. Some had little bleeding cuts all over their naked hides where they had been scratched and kicked by the locusts with those two powerful thorny legs of theirs. It was not so dark here as down in the valley by the hillside where the kraal was, as this was almost the end of the scourge of locusts.

The recent comers also joined in the general confusion; the air was filled with the crackling *purrr* of locusts, the swishing of the branches in the women's hands, the thud, thud, thud of dozens of feet as they rushed about trying to save the crop of grain, and, above all, the shrilling voices of

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the women. They were all very good-natured yet took the task in hand very seriously. They kept up their allotted task till the sun sank behind the hills, the larger part of the locust cloud had flown farther away, possibly to settle down on some neighboring community's field of corn.

Just before the stillness of the sunset came on, the men trooped out of the village gate and gathered up the bark cloth and robes that they had spread out with corn on them when the *inkubis* were first sighted. The bark cloth, robes and hides were covered all over with locusts feeding on the corn that was spread thereon.

Each man gathered up a robe, a hide, or bark cloth, carefully shook down to the center all the locusts on it, gathered up the loose ends and carried the bundle back to the *kaya*. He stepped inside the hut and closed the very low door. As the women had returned they took the bundles away from them. A fire was blazing away in the middle of the floor, which is the regular fireplace.

THE three-legged iron vessel was standing to one side of the fire; the contents of the bundle were gently shaken out on to the floor. The overfed locusts hopped about rather lazily; the corncobs rolled away in every direction and the ears of corn clashed out and heaped up like a golden mound. Everybody inside the hut grabbed hold of an *inkubi* wherever one was seen. The thing became almost like a game as the flickering flames lighted up and then died down. When a handful of locusts was gathered it was put inside the vessel by the fire. When almost full the cover was put on; more wood was put on the fire and the vessel was put on top this.

The wood began to blaze up; the vessel being large, there was no danger of any one not getting his share although the number of persons in the hut was large. The children groped about the floor catching the stray locusts and others that were overlooked. They gathered them from different places, from the four posts that held up the roof behind a lot of shields under some sticks and *imikonto* until they had another lot, enough to fill the vessel all over again. The vessel had become warm; an acrid smell, something like warmed-up beans or popped corn with rancid butter, filled the air.

The pot bubbled over, streaking the sides of the vessel and bursting into flame when it reached the fire. The cover was taken off, some salt poured on the seething mass. The whole thing was stirred round and round; then the vessel was taken off the fire and set to one side. Children jostled each other in order to be the nearest when the *i panda* (stirring stick) was given out or laid aside, so that they might lick the grease and locusts that were left on them.

Dishes carved out of solid pieces of wood were brought forward and filled up, the men being served first; and after a little the children and women ate. The meal was eaten with great appetite and zest. Why not? Was this not *i daka le inkubi*—locust pudding? All over the kraal in the different huts the same scene was duplicated. The children ate out of one great big dish, dipping in their hands and bringing out a certain amount on the tips of their fingers. In this way they were able to cram a lot in their mouths without burning themselves.

Toward the last it became a race, some filling their mouths so full they could neither close them nor chew; so part dropped back into the dish, which meant a fight that did not end until every one concerned was soundly beaten by one of the men and they were chased out of doors to sleep in some other hut or in the open air.

This was not so great a hardship as it would seem, for, during the warm months, sleeping out in the open is a general practise by mostly every one in the kraal, the only danger being that possibly an *ingwe* (leopard) may sneak in somewhere along the thorn fence that surrounds the village or a hungry lion jump over and make away with one of the people sleeping there, or another tribe come upon them by surprize and raid the whole village.

Upina, Mazalen and Tabata in the boys' hut ate with great relish and enjoyment the *idaka le inkubi* together with some wild tropical fruit that they had happened to bring back with them that day when they had been out to gather some wood for the fire in their hut. The score of boys crowded in the hut were all under a state of suppressed excitement, for in a few days' time they were to become men, to stand the test and ordeal that would lift them out of

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being *ama nkwenkwe* and make them *abafana* (young men) and later to hold the station of *indoda* (grown man) with the privilege of listening at the *inkohla* (councils) that were always being held by the older men.

There were all kinds of honors awaiting them in the future—to be an *induna* (a lieutenant), *um pakati* (a courtier and male retainer), *i gosa* (an orator, or a kind of a lawyer), *inkosana* (a petty prince) or even to be part of the great *umkosi* (warriors).

Different ones made sundry prophecies as to what they would become after they had gone through the ordeal and proven themselves men. Even as the college youth prophesies as to what he will do when he reaches the outside world, the night before school breaks up and the fellows smoke the last pipe and swear solemn vows, by all the laws of the fraternity that they belong to, to stand by loyally and solidly with frat brethren when in distress, and life seems so dazzling, thus does the native boy also look forward to a future that to him is dazzling and worthy. While there is a lot of argument going on and not so much laughter as at other times a well set up girl enters the hut to take away the wooden *zitya*—dishes. She is greeted with noisy hilarity and a lot of jeering because she is a girl.

She takes no notice of any one apparently but silently gathers together the dishes, puts them one on top of another, and getting down on one knee, lifts them to the top of her head, balances them a second or so, gets up, walks over to the door, stoops down and goes out. The boys, still talking, gather up their sleeping-mats and bark cloth blankets, troop out of the door and prepare themselves for the night's slumbers.

Although there is a lot of horseplay as they settle down, a hum of voices comes from a hut near by. The night is bright with the star-filled sky. There is the noise of *sh-flare*, *sh-flare*, *sh-flare* as two or three hands scratch some part of the body, comfortably; loud yawns are heard. All the other sounds die down and only the steady *chaawff*, *chaawff*, *chaawff* of a cow dreamily and contentedly chewing her cud is heard—that and nothing more.

THE sun had cast long rays over the kraal as if trying to sweep away the shadows of the night. A figure went in and out among the sleeping boys, snatching away the bark cloth or fur robes that covered them. As the covering was taken off the right arm was raised and came down with a whistling noise made by the *swazi* (switch) in his hand, for the figure was one of the *abafana*. The boys, half sleepy, groped around for the covering but were galvanized to full wakefulness as the *swazi* came in contact with their naked bodies.

The score or so of sleeping boys were awakened in this very effective, if rather rude, manner. Several more *abafana* joined the first one. They also had *swazis*. The boys milled about in one place like frightened cattle. The four *abafana* laid about on them with the *swazi* exclaiming:

"*Ntoni! Niti ni funa uku mba ngama doda, heh? Pumani apa nive lam mbeto nigami nide ni fike em lambeni pumani, pumani!*—What! You say you want to become men? Get out of here and go and feel that dew and don't stop till you get to the river; get out, get out!"

The boys fall over each other in their mad effort to get away from the stinging cuts of the *swazi* as it falls on their flesh. They stream through the gate and pad, pad, pad, swiftly on their way to the river, through the long grass that is covered with dew and drenches them as if they had been under a shower bath. Down a glade, up on the other side, they top the rise and pace away panting across the *taffa*, the four *abafana* lashing those that should by any chance lag. Some do, for the river is some distance away—three or four miles.

Sounds of heavy breathing, sharp struggles from behind are heard, as some husky boy becomes rebellious. They die away as the crowd trots away leaving the *nkwenkwe* and *umfan* to settle the matter between them. There is a rattle of stones as the boys descend the bank on the river side. They come to an abrupt stop at the edge of the water, panting for breath and eyeing the water uneasily, not knowing whether they are to plunge in it or not. The three *abafana* slide down the embankment and using the *swazi*, shout:

"*Ngenani kula manzi zi nto ngenani.*—Get into that water, you things, get in." But the boys are reluctant to do so, for they are afraid of the *abantu mbesi ziba* (people of the river) who will get hold of them and drag them under water and take away their liking for land. Also there is the *shiwempu* (crocodile) which is so much dreaded by all. Several boys run along the

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edge of the river. There is a vicious and sharp—ngam!

They leap high sidewise away from the river. A long, black, barnacle-covered something oozes swiftly out of the water and with incredible speed sets in pursuit after the three boys. It gains upon them at every step they take. They scramble up the embankment, clawing at the dirt and catching hold of anything that comes to hand—young saplings, ferns and large boulders. The *shiwempu* is not able to climb and, disappointed, it opens its terrible jaws slightly, as much as to say, "I'll get you yet inside here."

The boys do not stop until they are on top of some of the trees that grow along the river on the side of the embankment. The stench from the *shiwempu* is something putrid, seeming to be a combination of a sick *iqaqa* (pole cat) and *umkumxa* (hyena) smell when the wind is blowing the wrong way. The sounds of the other boys running up and down the shore farther down catches the *shiwempu's* ear.

It turns round, goes back into the water, and slipping quietly toward the middle of the river, without a ripple floats swiftly and silently toward the scene with only its nose and eyes visible. The gnarled ridges over the eyes and nose look like a knot or two on some floating old log. The water being black and swiftly flowing helps it out in this natural camouflage. The swift current carries it down. It merely has to steer its course by its long tail, turning slowly toward the shore and the unsuspecting crowd of boys.

It braces itself against the strong flow of the current by submerging for a few feet until it is able to gain a good foothold on the shelving of the shore and slowly raises its head until eyes and nose are out of the water.

The *abafana* have so harassed the boys that some of them are already stepping into the water. The other three are not missed, because there are so many and all constantly running about. One boy has waded until the water is up to his waist.

He puts his two hands together over his head in order to make a dive. A leap upward and his body describes a beautiful arc. The hands, arms, head and shoulders slip into the water. Just as his waist is about to follow the shoulders, the hips and legs hit the water sidewise even as the whole body is jerked forward and downward as by a tremendous force. The legs fan and thrash the water until it foams; the foam becomes flecked with blood; the dark water became a midnight color.

Those on the shore look on with helpless horror and fright, calling on one another—

"*Kangela, kangela!*—Look, look!" pointing at the boy's fast disappearing thrashing legs and feet. Suddenly the water seems to become alive with knots of old logs, the water eddies stealthily as it responds to the strong sweep of many tails steering their owners' way landward. With one accord *nkwenkwes* and *abafana* yell with fright and scramble up the embankment.

When they gain safety they turn round and look down and see dozens of *shiwempu* half way out of the water, with the wicked, sullen look that belongs to them and the hippopotamus.

The crowd of men and boys looked at the sight below until the crocodiles slipped away one by one to go and sleep on some warm mud under the fast rising sun, and the monkeys had already begun to chatter overhead, swinging from tree to tree. The *si kwenene* (parrots) shrilled and screeched as they went through their morning exercise. The boys began to search around for their *intango* (chum or buddy) and it was only then that it was found out that three of the crowd were missing; but the running grunt which most native boys often make, especially if they want to show unconcern, was heard, heads were turned in the direction whence the sounds came.

Around some trees they came, keeping time to the grunt as they trotted along. They came to a halt in front of one of the *abafana*, who eyed them keenly and demanded—

"*Mbi ni pina?*—Where were you?" They related the whole incident of being chased by the crocodile and climbing up the embankment and trees. They were asked if they had witnessed the tragedy of one of their number. They informed them that they had.

The whole band was commanded to go forward, two *abafana* led and the other two brought up the rear in order to see that none of the boys slipped away. They came upon an open place near a small *qina* (hill). The boys were commanded to *kiwa izi ndhlu* —to build huts. Three were given *ama zembe* (native axes) and told to cut down

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saplings and the others were to gather them up and build their huts, two boys to a hut. The boys sorted themselves out and started to follow out the orders given to them.

TO THOSE who were actually to build the huts were given *intambo* (thong rope made out of the hide of an ox) with a stake tied at one end, one boy held the end without a stake down to the ground and the other boy walked around in a circle scratching the ground with stake as he described and completed the circle. The saplings were put into this circle close together after the whole thing had been dug out to the depth of about six inches. The saplings were about six feet in length, tapering down to the soft and tender end of the switch shoot.

They were set all around with only a small space left for the door. The ground was tamped down around the bottom of them. *Iminxemba* (wild ivy) was worked in between them from the bottom up, spaced about eighteen inches above each working, the top was gathered inside and woven over and over each other. After this they brought the mud, which the other boys had been preparing by gathering up all the mole-hill mounds they could see and some ant-hill sand from some old abandoned ant-hill, which they prize very much as the ants know how to make this mud or sand impervious to the weather.

They dumped it in one place and poured water on it—which they had to get from the same river where they were earlier in the morning. The *kalabas* or *inselwa* were provided by one of the *abafana* who came prepared for everything. Having poured the water on the sand they *xovula* (kneaded) it by walking round and round in it until it stopped making a sucking noise and the bubbles disappeared.

It was then that they *tyamba izi ndi*—smeared it between the sticks or saplings. Some worked inside, others outside. The mud dried around their feet and ankles making them look as if they were wearing spats of gray. In a little while one hut was finished; then another and another, so when the sun had reached its noonday highest, more than a dozen huts had been built. The thatching did not take very long. The *abafana* walked about in and out among the working boys never saying a word, but merely seeing to it that they kept busy.

A group of *ama doda* (men) appeared. They walked in a stately fashion. They were saluted by the *abafana* very ceremoniously:

"*Itsoni abafana.*—Say it, young men. *Si ya pila togrmana.*—We are well thanked." They walked down the line of huts looking at them with approval in their eyes. A little later there came into view a dark man with an impatient walk. He was smoking a very black, large pipe, which belched smoke as if it were on fire. He wore his *ntabo* (wedding hat ring) at a defiant angle, under his left arm. He had a big bundle of dried *um tatati* (wood) *ma sqazi.*

His right arm seemed curiously stiff under his *bayi*, which he had gracefully draped over that side and around his body. He had a steady look which was very disconcerting, and stood apart from all because he had one great adornment which most native men do not have—that is, a beard. For, strange to relate, very few natives are able to raise a full growth beard. The majority never do, not even a mustache, and, therefore, those who are able to accomplish this seeming impossible feat are looked upon with great envy and some reverence and are always referred to as "man with a beard."

As long, silky, glossy hair is striven for by women in civilization, so does a native male strive for a beard. What bearing this has on the native is beyond the writer to state, only it might be said that the native rarely, in fact never, suffers from any of the facial blemishes that are so common in civilization among men. Let some one more learned in the human hide study this out.

The thatching was done and the boys were taken to a spot near an ant-hill. They were paired off. There was an odd boy because of the one who was dragged down and eaten in the river by the crocodile in the morning. One of the *abafana* related the whole incident to the group of men. They listened to the end and made no comment whatsoever, merely remarking—

"*Haba u yoku fumana enye ikwekwe.*—Go and get another boy." And the *um fana* went. The *um fo ne devu* (the man with a beard) untied the bundle of *swazis* and handed one to each boy except the odd one. They were told:

"*Lunganil*—Get ready;" then, "*Mbetan nani.*—Hit each other!" The *swazis* whistled in the air and *si-mamel* against the

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flesh. The man with the beard walked up and down the line of boys, his pipe smoking furiously, his eyes set. If he thought one boy was favoring another he lashed each in turn with the *swazi* in his right hand that had peculiar stiffness.

The air was full of the sweesh-sweesh-sweesh of the *swazis* as they whistled through the air. Pink, watery welts formed all over each boy's back, legs, stomach and throat, and the side of the face, such as the jaw and cheek. The man with the beard kept his ever-watchful eyes on every boy. If a *swazi* broke he handed one out of his large bundle. The perspiration streamed down the boys' faces and bodies. There was a sudden call—

"*Pezani!*—Halt!" They obeyed wearily.

"The man with the beard" walked down the line quickly peering into each boy's eyes to see if there were any tears in them. Satisfied, he told them—

"*Gugani ni nga nxami.*—Kneel slowly." They obeyed. He knelt before the end one; his arm lost its stiffness; there was the flash of steel—a spear head—and with that short motion the boy became an *indoda*—a man. The act of circumcision had been done; and so down the line he went until he filled his mission. Being brought up to repress any feeling of pain, they did not suffer any more. The excruciating torture of the *swazi* test had left them numb.

They were told to get up, and each had his face smeared with *imbola* to show that he was now *um kweta* (a newly-made man and had passed the test of manhood). Each was given a *celua* of herbs to use later. Both the *imbola* (white ochre) and the herbs had been prepared by the men who came especially for that purpose. A meal was prepared which the *ama kweta* tried to eat, but their pained and welted bodies prevented them. Flies swarmed over them until the soothing herbs were rubbed into their sores.

They crawled into the different newly made huts and sat down wearily to doze off into troubled sleep. Some groaned unconsciously. Upina and his friend Mazalen had one hut together. Tabata had doubled up with another boy. Voices were heard outside. The *umfana* had arrived with the boy to take the place of the one eaten up by the crocodile. They were given each a *swazi*. The boys were told to whip each other.

They obeyed, but it was evident after the first fine cuts from the *swazi* that the newly arrived boy was not of the right caliber to stand this terrific test and punishment, for he screwed his eyes up and winced at each cut as the *swazi* came in contact with his body. After a while a halt was called and the man with the beard walked up quickly and peered into the weakling's eyes. The tears streamed down the boy's face.

With sullen expression he looked elsewhere than into the eyes of the man with the beard. With an exclamation of disgust the man, with one swift motion, pushed the boy away, sending him spinning to the ground. The other men strode forward and pronounced the condemning sentence—

"*Uli sana inkwenkwen aku zoze ube yi ndoda.*—You are an infant, a boy; you will never be a man." The boy, whose name was Magada (clods of earth) because of his knobby knees and very awkward elbows, sat sniffling where he had fallen, sighing long sobs. The men turned their backs on him and the ritual was gone through with the other boy who was praised beyond all measure, though he had done no more than any of the others before him earlier in the day, but it pained the men to have even one of the band prove not quite so stoic as they would have him, and tradition demanded.

LATE in the afternoon the *ama kweta* were called out and told to get *imi gibo*, traps for *imbuzi* (wild rats), which would help them to regain their strength and heal their wounds. They set about finding trails that the *imbuzi* always make going to and fro, searching for food. A dozen different trails were found. An *intabo*, rope, made and pleated out of *inca ende* (long grass), was made and a loose running-noose was fashioned. The loop was laid cunningly in the trail; the other end was tied to a strong twig which was bent all the way down and twined around with some short grass.

This was done all over the different trails that were found and the *ama kweta* left the traps set and went and made a large roaring fire. It was kindled by gathering a small amount of dried grass and some twigs, dry also; the fire from the pipe of the man with the beard was placed carefully on the dried grass and blown till it caught light. The twigs flamed; heavier wood was put on and soon a blazing and a roaring fire was ready.

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The man with the beard ground some tobacco in his palms, rammed it into his pipe, snatched a brand out of the fire, placed it over the bowl of his pipe, puffed until the *icuba* caught alight, broke off the end of the living red coal, pressed hard down the bowl, flung the stick back into the fire and walked away with that impatient walk of his.

As the shadows were about to turn to night, the *ama kweta* returned to their traps. From different loops there dangled large, live *imbuzi*, as large as domestic cats. The twigs jumped up and down as the choking *imbuzi* struggled in vain to get away from the strangling grass ropes around their throats. The trappers yelled with delight at the sight of so many *imbuzi* captured.

Each one took off his captive by first grasping it firmly by the fat part back of the neck until the rat "grinned" and then slipped off the noose. Care was taken not to be scratched, for the *imbuzi* has terribly sharp claws. They are very sharp and cut to the bone, and the hand soon turns black after such an encounter and later rots off (gangrened). The *imbuzi* were carried back to the bonfire and cast alive into the heart of it. The wild rats squealed and tried to scamper out, but their paws were burned off them even as they tried to run out.

The fur sizzled on their backs and crisped to feathery cinders. Dozens of rapid explosions were heard above the roar of the blazing logs as the eyes of these wild rodents exploded under the terrific heat. The *awa kweta* fished out the roasted bodies from the center of the fire, and, alternately blowing on them and tossing them from left to right hand to cool, when they had cooled sufficiently, devoured them ravenously. In a short space of time nothing was left except the smell of burned meat.

They were informed by one of the men who had been watching them that they might go and help themselves to some *matango* (pumpkins) or *intayambontyi* (squash) growing in the fields. This permission was a privilege, for no native would even think of stealing among his own tribe; but this being a special occasion, it was not counted an offense.

The *ama kweta* plunged into the darkness and went crashing to the different chosen fields and returned later with loads of *matango* and *intayambontyi* over both shoulders, having brought vine and all back. The pumpkins were burst open by being thrown down on the ground; the seeds were taken out and the contents roasted by the fire. The squash was treated the same way. There arose a very appetizing smell in the night air. The older men joined in the feasting.

When everything had been eaten up they lay around within a comfortable distance of the fire until they were told to *yokulala* (go to sleep) by the men in charge of them, and they obeyed. Two of the number were told to stay up and act as guard against the wild beasts of the forest, such as lions, leopards, cheetahs and such, also to keep the fire aflame. They were given half a dozen full grown and dried *ncungolo* (bamboo-like sticks) which were about fifteen feet in length and had been split at the top and a quarter of the way down and slightly greased. Two of these were lighted at the slender end and put into the hands of the two who were to act as guard.

These sticks were called *incangola zombu suku*—sticks of the night. At stated intervals during the night one of the guard walked about and around the whole line of huts with one of the sticks alight, held at an angle. If he saw a pair of golden bright eyes shining in the dark, he, if not too frightened, thrust the lighted end of the stick at those eyes and the owner of the eyes beat a hasty retreat, for a wild beast can not understand this warm soft something that seems to come from the sky; so all through the night-tide the two replenished the fire, while golden eyes, green eyes and brown eyes watched them from a distance, afraid to come nearer because of the fire and the fire-sticks.

The next ten days were given over to hunting and training so as to become perfect scouts. Their bodies being healthy, the welts soon healed. They dived away from sight whenever a band of women happened their way, possibly to get some water for their households in the village, or going cross country; for it was the rule and the law at this period that they should not be seen by, or see any women. Therefore they lay hidden for quite a long time.

The favorite sport was chasing and catching *ipangela* (wild guinea fowl) and *inkuku yasendle* (wild fowl). This gave them good wind and stamina.

The last day came and every hut was

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dented at the side, leaving a big, gaping hole. This was to show that men had been living there.

Their faces painted white and all the furs of the animals that they had killed while they were becoming men over their shoulders, singing *"Ingomo Yaba Fana,"* they started homeward, very proud, very noisy and very eager for the next adventure that life had to offer them.

This is the third of six pictures of native African life, by Santie Sabalala, each complete in itself. The next appears in the December 30th issue.

The Deacon's Seventy-four

By Farnham Bishop

Author of "The Rest-Cure," "Plattsburg, 1814," etc.

"BACK already, heh?" snapped Deacon Terwilliger, owner of the privateer *Active*, as the commander of that vessel strode into the dingy little water-front office in Falport, Mass. "Haow many prizes?"

Through the cobweb-curtained window beside his high desk, the deacon had already seen his topsail schooner come limping back into harbor, less than a month after she had set forth to harry and plunder the British shipping. Many another Yankee craft was busy earning fame for her crew and profits for her owners in that adventurous year of 1812.

But the *Active* had obviously met with hard luck and harder fighting. Her maintopmast was gone, her beautiful new suit of sails was a crazy-quilt of patches, and the white jets streaming overside told of shot-holes below the water-line.

There would be no profits from this cruise, but, instead, a long repair-bill—with calkers, riggers and carpenters refusing to work except for scandalous wages. The thought of it brought an ugly smile to a face already sufficiently ill-favored. While the rest of the town were running down to the wharves and shoving off in dories to welcome the returning crew, Terwilliger had remained hunched over his ledger till he heard behind him the crisp footfall of the *Active's* skipper, Captain Asa Swift.

Owner and captain made a strongly contrasted pair as they faced each other across the dusty office. The deacon shaved every Saturday night and donned a clean shirt every Sunday morning, but this was Friday afternoon, when he was at his dingiest.

The quill-like bristles on his sallow face, the feather pen stuck behind one ear, the whole attitude of the lanky figure in rusty black perched on the high stool where he had twisted about without rising, combined to complete the likeness to some greedy, frowsy bird of prey.

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But no regular officer in either of the contesting navies made a smarter appearance than Captain Asa Swift. Except for the epaulets, he wore the naval uniform of the period: white knee-breeches, long-tailed, high-collared blue coat and a new cocked hat with a black cockade embossed with an eagle. His tall, lean body was as straight and supple as the small-sword that hung by his side, and every feature of his brown, clean-shaven face marked him as the fighting leader of fighting men.

"Haow many prizes?" repeated Terwilliger.

"One."

"Whar is she?" demanded the deacon.

"Forty-nine, two North; thirty-one, three West," reported the captain, promptly and solemnly.

"Deuteronomy!" snarled the deacon, "What in Sam Hill's she doin' out there in mid-Atlantic? Do you mean you had to sink her?"

"Set her afire," corrected Captain Swift. "English privateer bark *Liverpool Lass*, outward bound to our coast, same as we were heading for hers. Guess it's a good thing for the ship-owners on both sides we met up as we did.

"She carried ten nine-pounder carronades and two long twelves, with swivels in her tops. Packed full of men, and kept trying to close and board. But we had the legs and the weather-gauge of her. I held my distance and cut her up with the Long Tom, till I judged her people were ready to strike.

"I won't make that mistake again in a hurry, I can tell you. Those Britishers were playing possum. Soon as we ranged up alongside, they came to life and pitched into us tooth and toe-nail. Ripped up our top-hamper, shot away out maintopmast, and before we could clear away the wreckage, the *Liverpool Lass* had her bowsprit over the *Active's* rail.

"The English were hacking away at our boarding-netting, when we swung round the Long Tom and let drive with a double charge of grape. That cleared the fo'c'sle, and before they could recover, we were swarming over their bows. They put up a plucky fight in the waist, but there weren't enough of 'em left standing to keep it up long.

"The bark was too badly battered to bring into port and we needed a refit ourselves. So I took off the prisoners, set her alight, and here we are."

"And here you kin stay and rest ashore till Judgment Day, for all of me!" cried Deacon Terwilliger. "Think I spent my good money fittin' out the *Active* for that kind of fightin' foolishness? Didn't you have the faster ship and the weather-gauge? Why didn't you sheer off and go about your business, like I told you to? Didn't I tell you to leave the English warships and privateers be and go after their merchant craft?"

"Come to think of it, you did," admitted Captain Swift. "And Captain Barclay of the *Liverpool Lass* told me that he had the same high-minded, patriotic orders from *his* owners. Guess he sort of forgot himself and used his orders for gun-wadding, same as I did."

"You did, heh?" snapped the exasperated Terwilliger. "Wall, you'll get no more orders from me, Cap'n Asa Swift, nor no more ships, neither. I'll take command of the *Active* myself, next cruise, and you can go straight to——."

The deacon gulped and shut his tobacco-stained lips abruptly on the concluding word, as if he had suddenly remembered his position in the church.

"Go on," said the captain gently. "Speak up and say what's on your mind."

Terwilliger's mind was at that moment entirely occupied by the grim fact that Asa Swift was the champion all-round fighter of Falport. The captain's blue eyes were smiling facetiously into his and the large sinewy brown hands were opening and closing in a way that sent cold shivers up and down the ship-owner's spine.

"Just where did you say I could go to?" purred Captain Swift.

"If you're looking for another ship," said the suddenly inspired deacon, "you can go to Noah Bloggs."

"HURRY up and say it," implored Bloggs.

"Say what, Noah?" asked the captain, smiling down at the woful-looking little shipwright.

"Suthin' about my ark. Ask me whether she's pitched within and without, or whereabouts is the window for the dove to fly out of, or haow I calculate to get the live-stock aboard. Gol ram it, I ain't heard nothin' else since she was launched!"

Standing ankle-deep in the chips and shavings of the tiny, primitive shipyard,

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the two men looked at the extraordinary craft riding at anchor before them.

She was a schooner with a huge square foretops'l—the rig popularly known as a "Baltimore clipper." But there was nothing of the clipper about her hull. Her bows were blunt and her stern was square and wide, her poop was big enough for a Spanish galleon, her bulwarks high enough for a frigate, and her lines awkward enough for a Canton cargo-junk.

"Used to be a house-carpenter, didn't you, Noah?"

"I was, and I wish to thunder I'd had sense enough to stick to my natural trade," said Bloggs forlornly. "But business was brisker afloat than ashore, so I spent two thousand dollars I won in the Harvard College lottery for a half-interest in Ezra Harpswell's shipyard here.

"Ezra, he agreed to teach me all he knew about ship-building, and that was a-plenty. But gol ram it, he never used plans nor papers but did it all in his head. And when he upped and died on me last month, he left me high and dry.

"We were building that schooner for Deacon Terwilliger and had her hull 'bout half done when Ezra ran a rusty nail into his hand and died of lockjaw. I finished the job with a batch of raw 'prentices, good as I knew how. But she sailed suthin' awful on her trial trip, and the deacon, he wouldn't take her.

" 'Contract calls for a fast, handy topsail schooner, fit for a pilot-boat or privateer,' " says he. " 'You've built a mud-scow and you can keep her.'

"I'll admit he was within his rights, but he hadn't no call to be so all-fired nasty about it, had he, Cap'n Swift?"

"He certainly hadn't," agreed the captain. "I aim to take hold of the old curmudgeon and mend his manners, one of these days. Now that he's left this craft on your hands, Noah, what are you thinking of doing with her?"

"Reckon I'll lay her up till the war's over and then put her into the coasting trade—if my creditors don't sell me up in the meanwhile."

"How'd you like to go equal shares with me in her as a privateer under my command?" asked Swift.

Had Commodore Rodgers or Captain Isaac Hull, U. S. N., made the same modest request, the astounded Noah Bloggs could have stared no harder than he did at the local hero.

"B-but what about the *Active?*" he stammered. "Mean to say you ain't goin' to take her out no more?"

"Her owner and I have parted company," said Swift. "Too much fighting and not enough plunder to suit the deacon."

"I'll suit him!" growled Noah Bloggs. "Gol ram his hide, I'll suit him slicker'n b'ar's grease!"

He shuffled through the shavings on his stubby little legs, a grotesque figure but also an uncommonly powerful man in a thoroughly dangerous mood. Muttering to himself, Bloggs rummaged about till he found a half-filled tar-barrel and was trundling it out through the gate of the yard when the captain's hand fell on his shoulder and brought him to a halt.

"Where are you going, Noah?"

"Goin' for Ma's second-best feather bed! I aim to give that old buzzard Terwilliger a goose-hair coat that he won't moult in a hurry. We'll ride the measly old hunks out of town on a fence-rail!"

"You'll do no such thing," said Asa Swift with quiet finality. "Let go that tar-barrel and listen to me, Noah Bloggs. Aren't you a patriotic American?"

"I certainly be! And that's why——"

"And that," interposed the captain, "is why neither you nor any other man in Falport is going to hinder Terwilliger's taking his own armed vessel out to cruise against our country's enemies. He's a mean man but he's likewise a mighty capable seaman or he'd never have made the pile he did out of molasses, slaves, and Medford rum in the old Triangle Trade. Let him take out his meanness and his capability on the Britishers and let's us do the same.

"Now about this misfit schooner of yours. Do I understand that from keel to waterline she's designed and built by Ezra Harpswell himself?"

"She be!" said Noah emphatically. "Her bottom's the handsomest part of her."

"And the most important. If Ezra Harpswell made her underbody, she ought to sail in spite of her topsides. Have you tried altering her rig or shifting her ballast? We'll see what we can do after she's had another trial-trip. By the way, Noah, what's her name?"

"She was launched as the *Terror*. But the deacon said I ought to change it to

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Terrapin, and gol ram him, the new name stuck!"

"We'll take the curse off by going him one better," declared Asa Swift. "We'll call her the *Snapping Turtle*."

Two months later, Noah Bloggs, lieutenant of marines on the privateer *Snapping Turtle*, looked at the chase and spat cheerfully into the white water foaming swiftly past the lee rail.

"Overhauling her hand over hand. Cap'n, you ought to set up practise as a ship-doctor. You've turned the slowest schooner on earth into a mighty handy brig."

"Handiest thing about her, Noah, is that she still looks so slow and peaceable. Those patent topsides of yours make her look like a Swede lumberman or a Dutch collier or anything else afloat except a Yankee privateer. Trouble with the *Active* was that she scared more craft than she could catch. I've got a theory that a merchantman ought to look as big and fierce as a warship or privateer——"

"Sail, ho!" came a bawl from the fore-topmast cross-trees.

"Where away?"

"Right ahead—coming about Point Finisterre!"

Captain Asa Swift lay aloft himself and brought his long brass telescope to bear. British cruisers were altogether too plentiful here at this windy corner where the Bay of Biscay and the North Atlantic meet. One look, and he gave a guffaw that carried to the anxious ears of his officers on the quarter-deck.

"Speak of the devil and you raise his topsails!" he said as he rejoined them. "It' the *Active*."

"Gol ram the luck!" swore the disgusted Noah. "The deacon'll head the Britisher off and snap him up right out from under our noses. We've been chasing a nice fat pig straight into Terwilliger's pen!"

"It'll be hog-killing time before he gets there," replied Swift cheerfully. "If nothing carries away in the next twenty minutes our bow-chasers are going to be within range."

On swept pursuer and pursued, running free before a two-reef nor'easter. It was the second dog-watch and the English merchantman which the privateer had sighted at dawn and held in chase ever since would soon have to strike or fight. She was a fine full-rigged ship of at least eight hundred tons, or more than three times the size of the *Snapping Turtle*.

But though small, the *Snapping Turtle* was heavily manned and armed. She carried six twelve-pounder carronades on either broadside, a long eighteen pivoted amidship and two long twelves forward that could be shifted to reenforce either battery or else run out through the bridle-ports to serve as bow-chasers.

Such heavy metal was unusual on the fo'c'sle of so small a vessel, but Swift had discovered that the odd little craft sailed best when down by the head.

She had put out from Falport packed with men. Practically the entire crew of the *Active* had chosen to sail with their old commander and new hands brought the number of officers and men aboard to an even hundred. As fast as captures were made, prize crews would be sent aboard them, till the privateer could spare no more. The longer and more successful her cruise, the weaker she would become.

But the *Snapping Turtle* had yet to take her first prize.

All hands were on deck and at their battle stations. The seamen-gunners were standing by their loaded pieces, the small-arms men under Noah—a quaint drill-master but a famous marksman—were in the tops or drawn up on the poop and fo'c'sle. Boarding-pikes and cutlases had been served out, the decks sanded, and the boats covered with canvas to keep the splinters from flying in case one of them were hit by a solid-shot.

There was nothing to do but wait till the bow-chasers were within range. Going forward to the fo'c'sle, Swift instructed the captains of the chase-guns.

"Train both your pieces on the rudder-head," he commanded.

"Fire!"

Both linstocks came down together. A dense white cloud of powder-smoke hid everything for a moment, then shredded away before the wind. A snowy fountain of spray spouted up in the Englishman's wake and splinters flew from his taffrail.

"Ease your quoin a mite, Starbuck. Drive yours in a mite, Gifford," directed Swift as he studied the target through his telescope. They were near enough now for him to make out the fugitive's name.

"*Prince of Orange*, Londonderry. Outward bound and heavily laden. That'll be very nice, at the present price of Irish

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linens. But Ulstermen are a fighting breed. There go their stern-chasers. Great rolling hoopsnakes!"

Something shrieked through the air, swooped down upon the *Snapping Turtle's* fo'c'sle and swept off her captain's tall cocked hat. The weather foreshrouds and all the headsail halyards were shot away—jib, foretopmast-staysail and fore-sail were suddenly as full of blue sky as the air was full of assorted noise.

"What in creation are they shootin' at us?" gasped Noah Bloggs, as the Yankee seamen swarmed aloft to repair the damage.

"Chain-shot, and mighty well aimed! Ha, that's the ticket!"

The second round from the privateer's bow-chasers struck squarely against the *Prince of Orange's* counter, crashed through and apparently raked the Ulsterman from stern to stem. One of her after-guns was silenced; the other continued to fire slowly but without effect.

The *Snapping Turtle's* gunners were now within easy range and making good practise. A twelve-pound solid-shot smashed the neck and cheeks of the rudder-head, another carried away the wheel. Crippled and unmanageable, unable to do anything but run before the wind, the *Prince of Orange* could neither fight nor flee much longer.

"We'll luff up athwart her stern, give her a raking broadside, and then lay her aboard," said Captain Swift to his first officer.

At that moment, a bar-shot from the Ulsterman's remaining stern-chaser struck squarely against the *Snapping Turtle's* foremast, five feet above the deck. Had it been a solid cannon-ball, it would have cut through the pine like a razor through a hair. As it was, the wounded and almost unsupported lower mast gave a rending groan that told of the tremendous strain upon it. There was nothing for it but to heave to and ease the strain long enough to repair damages.

Noah Bloggs threw his high marine shako on the deck and jumped on it till that handsome headpiece was a wad of crumpled cardboard.

"Hangnation take it!" he wailed. "Now the deacon'll bag that Britisher as sure as Christmas!"

It was even so.

By the time the brig's foremast had been fished, new shrouds set up and preventer-stays rigged, the *Prince of Orange* was a league to leeward, running dead before the wind on a course that would ultimately have piled her up on the rocks off Cape Finisterre. The Ulster skipper hung on as long as he could, while the half-drowned "Chips" slung over the stern, strove desperately between duckings to free and repair the smashed and jammed rudder-head.

But the second Yankee privateer was too close at hand. Beating swiftly up to windward, the *Active* tacked past the *Prince of Orange's* broadside at a wary distance, came about and ran under her stern. Unable to resist or escape and observing that the *Snapping Turtle* was again under way and bearing down on him under shortened sail, the British captain prudently struck his colors. To save his ship from drifting ashore, he also let go both anchors.

A prize-crew from the *Active* was in possession and the schooner standing by when the *Snapping Turtle* came up and hove to within hailing distance.

"Sheer off!" bawled Deacon Terwilliger hospitably through a huge tin speaking-trumpet. "This here is my prize and don't you try no funnydiddles, Cap'n Swift. She beat you off and I took her all by my lone-self."

"I shot that fat duck flying and you picked her up where she fell," retorted Swift. "If we weren't at war and in the enemy's waters, I'd come aboard of you and teach you a lesson in sportsmanship, you old game-hog. Keep her and send her into Falport if you can, while I beat up for more. How's business off the Portuguese coast?"

"Toll'able," replied the deacon. "Sighted a big homeward-bound Britisher off there this noon, but I hain't so fond of needless fighting as some folks, so I left her be."

"You don't have to explain any," answered Swift drily. "Guess I'll drop down there and have a look at her. So long, deacon, and remember us in your prayers."

"You ain't goin' to act on that old curmudgeon's say-so, be you, cap'n?" asked Noah Bloggs anxiously.

"I know pretty well how far to trust to the deacon's word," said Captain Swift. "He'll sail mighty close to the wind sometimes but he won't plump out with a point-blank lie for fear of losing his insurance, as you might say. How far he's fooling

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himself when he thinks he's fooling the Almighty, it isn't for me to judge.

"But when Terwilliger says that he sighted a ship at a given time and place, then you can depend on it that he did. Looks like we're going to have a mite of rain after we round the point."

Gray clouds were gathering and shortening the long Summer afternoon into premature dusk, as the *Snapping Turtle* passed Cape Finisterre and laid her course for the south. The wind had slackened, but a rain-storm burst and raged with almost tropical intensity. The heavy downpour blotted out the Peninsular coast and hid the sea beyond a ship's length in every direction.

For all the grumbling privateersmen knew, they might have met and passed a dozen English vessels as they plodded blindly on down the coast.

Then out of the heaviest rain-squall of the day, they came suddenly into blinding sunlight. Astern, the sharply-defined edge of the storm lay like a curtain hung between sea and sky; to starboard, the setting sun was still clear of the horizon. Its level rays, striking across the sea, threw a strong light on the rocky coast-line, and were reflected back from the gleaming, rain-wet topsides of a huge ship, two points off the *Snapping Turtle's* port bow and within easy range of her guns.

But the little Yankee brig was likewise within reach of the stranger's ordnance—tier above tier of the heaviest guns afloat, run out and ready to blow their puny foe out of the water. One glance at that mighty armament and St. George's cross streaming proudly above, made every American feel himself already at the gates of Dartmoor Prison. The privateer was caught under the broadside of a British ship-of-the-line.

The nor'-easter blew itself out that night. By morning the sea had gone down sufficiently for the *Active's* men to begin effective repair-work on the shot-shattered rudder and steering-gear of the *Prince of Orange*. The longer they worked, the more they found to do, for the *Snapping Turtle's* bow-chasers had been uncommonly thorough. All day the carpenters and seamen labored, while the *Active* stood by her anchored prize keeping an anxious lookout for British cruisers.

"Ain't you got her fixed up yet?" called the deacon through his speaking-trumpet, as the afternoon wore on.

" 'Bout an hour more and we'll be ready to get a move on," answered the commander of the prize-crew. Then he gave a glance to the south-westward and contradicted himself abruptly.

"I'm a liar! We'll quit right now! All boats away! All hands abandon ship!"

Overside went the prize-crew and away they pulled toward the schooner, whose owner and captain was shaking a scrawny fist in the general direction of Cape Finisterre. Around the point was coming the same tall seventy-four that he had fallen in with and fled from yesterday.

"Drat it, I figured she'd chase that jackfool Asa daown-wind and give me time to get the *Prince of Orange* patched up and under way. Dad bingle the luck!" snarled Deacon Terwilliger.

"Call yourself a privateersman?" he demanded, as the boats came alongside and the ex-prize-crew and their commander swarmed aboard. "Why in the nation didn't you scuttle that craft or set her afire before you left her?"

"Because her own skipper and crew are still aboard her, battened under hatches by your orders!" snapped his subordinate. "Since you ask me whether I call myself a privateersman, Cap'n Terwilliger, I'll say that I don't hanker to have folks call me a murderer and a pirate!"

"Don't you dare insinooate that I meant you to burn 'em alive or do anything so inhuman!" raged the deacon. "Why didn't you roust 'em out of the forehold and bring 'em along with you?"

"Because I knew durn well that if I'd waited and tried to transship the prisoners, you'd have skipped off and left us in the lurch," said the mate coolly. "Same as you served Asa Swift yesterday, when you sicked him on to that seventy-four."

"Drat your imper'ence!" cried the angry deacon, as he brandished a long arm and uncouth weapon high above the chunky little mate. "Don't you dast say I done anything of the kind!"

"You hit me with that speaking-trumpet and I'll ram it down your parsimonious old throat!" retorted the undaunted first officer. "Cap'n Swift asked you to remember him in your prayers and you'd better turn to and pray your durndest that the *Snapping Turtle* wasn't sunk or captured by that big

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Britisher. For if she was, then there's going to be trouble in Falport."

Terwilliger's sallow face turned yellowish-green as the truth of this sank home. He had craftily planned that Swift should lead the seventy-four away on a wild-goose chase to leeward, while he himself got clear with the stolen prize.

But suppose that the brig had been promptly overtaken or sent to the bottom, as the battleship's unexpected return to her former course would seem to indicate? Then the survivors of the *Snapping Turtle's* crew would have an ill tale to tell when at last they came home.

Silence prevailed on the schooner's quarter-deck as she worked to windward at a pace that no square-rigger could hope to equal, especially in light airs. The seventy-four made no attempt to pursue. Instead, she backed her topsails and sent a boat's crew aboard the *Prince of Orange*, still riding at anchor with her canvas furled, her deck deserted, and her crew battened down below.

FALPORT will never forget the day when Deacon Terwilliger came home from that famous cruise.

He came a-flying, wing-and-wing, with a sky full of wind astern. A schooner is at her best close-hauled, rather than running free and large, but the deacon had no choice. For pounding along behind him, studding-sails set and three tall pyramids of canvas lifting her ponderous hull through the smashing seas at amazing speed, was that same British seventy-four!

They had sighted each other in mid-ocean after the *Active* had slipped away from her huge foe off Finisterre only to fall in with a persistent sloop-of-war that chased the privateer far out to sea.

Having escaped that peril, the deacon had decided to cruise in the path of the homeward-bound West Indian packets. But the first sail he had raised was that of his old adversary, westward bound and apparently determined to run down and capture her puny enemy.

Running before the wind, the ship-of-the-line was at an advantage and drew steadily up on the schooner. A chase-gun roared and a round-shot splashed uncomfortably close to the *Active's* counter. Unless the privateer bettered her speed, she would soon have to "heave to or take the consequence."

"We'll have to lighten ship," said the deacon to his mate. "Pump out all we can spare of the fresh water and use some of it to wet daown the sails."

This was done, and the next heave of the log showed the pace improved by a good half-knot. But the seventy-four still hung on and her next shot plumped alongside.

"Heave over the rum and whisky!" cried the deacon mournfully. The wake was full of barrels and kegs. The pursuer fell behind, then drew up again and reopened fire. Her gunners had the range and made some wonderfully close misses.

"Reckon we'll have to throw over our guns and ammunition," said the Yankee mate. "We certainly can't use 'em against this feller, and a few tons less cargo ought to do the trick."

"I'm a ruined man!" wailed Terwilliger. "It's a downright shame for a ship-of-the-line to pick on a little privateer!"

Long Tom and carronades, chain-shot, cannon-balls, grape and gunpowder, all bought and paid for at war-prices, splashed overside. Every pound of ballast they dared dispense with, all the spare stores, and even the small-arms were thrown after. The long boat was hove over, and the round-house and galley cut away. By the time they raised the New England coast, the *Active* was stripped and gutted to the bone.

Straight for Falport she sped, where she met with a rather mixed welcome.

"I'm glad you escaped and proud of your seamanship, Cap'n Terwilliger," said Colonel Seth Dusenbury, commanding the Falport County militia, who had been thronging into town as soon as the chase had been sighted, twenty miles up the coast. "But I can't help wishing you'd put into Boston or some other place where they have enough big guns ashore to keep that Britisher from following in after you."

"What about those new earthworks on Falport Point?" demanded the deacon. "Mean to say the guns for them haven't come yet? They were promised to be here before now, when I set sail."

"Promises are all we've ever got," said the colonel. "Here comes the seventy-four round Tautog Shoal and bearing straight for the harbor. Somebody aboard her knows these waters almighty well."

Crossing the bar on the crest of the flood-tide, the hugest ship that Falport had ever

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seen sailed proudly into the little harbor. As she passed the point, down came the red ensign and man-of-war pennant, and up went the Stars and Stripes.

Drums and fifes on her deck burst into "Yankee Doodle," as the captain's gig pulled for the shore, with a familiar figure in the sternsheets.

"Cap'n Asa Swift!" shouted the excited crowd on the wharves and beach. "Asa Swift's captured a British seventy-four!"

"Looks like one, doesn't she?" said the smiling privateersman, shaking hands and nodding over his shoulder toward the great vessel now riding at anchor in the bay. "If we hadn't happened to stumble right on top of her and get a good close look, we'd have sheered off and given her the widest kind of a berth.

"But coming as close alongside as we did, I couldn't help noticing that there was something queer about her port battery. I passed my spy-glass to Noah Bloggs and told him to take a look at her guns.

" 'Quakers!' he hollered. 'Wooden dummies, painted black to make 'em look like iron. I can see where the paint's been weathered off and the white wood's showing through. You can't fool a house-carpenter with a trick like that!'

"So we gave her a broadside of grape and canister, wore up across her bows, grappled and swarmed aboard. Her crew broke and skedaddled below at the first fire, being only a lot of Lascars who'd shipped to sail but not to fight. The English officers and men passengers held the poop a few minutes and that was all.

"I decided to let 'em have the brig, because her foremast had gone by the board when we fetched up alongside. Next day we hoisted out our guns, wished the Britishers a pleasant voyage and stood for home on the prize.

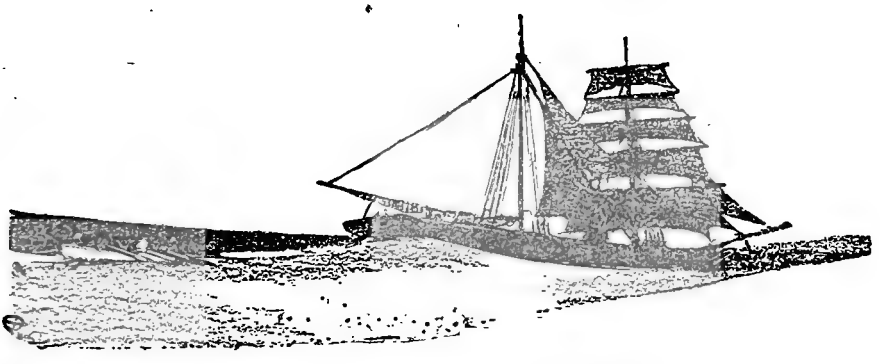
"She's the East Indiaman *Nabob*, Bombay to London. No, not a John Company ship but some new concern who were running her on the cheap. Nothing cheap about the cargo, though; worth all of a million, I guess. Picked up another prize on the voyage home—sent her into New York.

"Why, hello, deacon! The *Active* looks pretty light. Have you had a good cruise?"

"You—you lawless picaroon!" snorted Terwilliger, who had been forcing his way through the crowd on the wharf, till he was able to confront the smiling Asa.

"What did you mean by chasing me in here and firing on me under enemy colors?"

"Why, Cap'n Terwilliger!" exclaimed Swift innocently. "Can it be that you didn't realize that we were only funnydiddling, as you call it? Couldn't you see that we were shooting to miss and carrying a drag astern? Now listen, friends and neighbors, and I'll tell you the story of the deacon's seventy-four."



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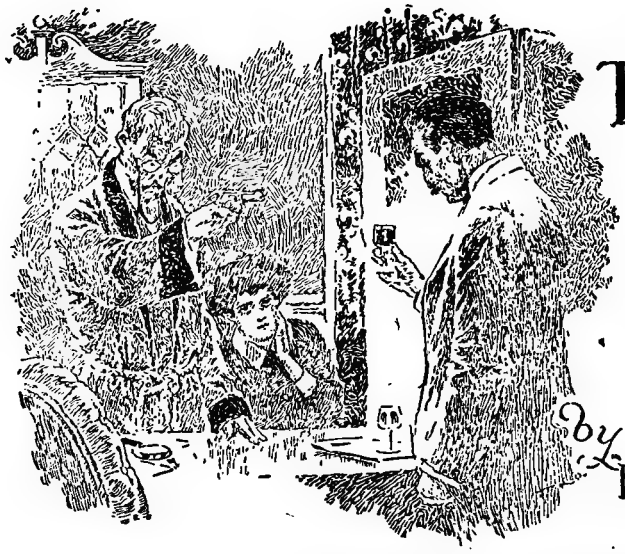

The Frozen Glass

by Henry Leverage

Author of "The Coast of Azure," "Gyved," etc.

DOWN Vine Street, cityward, Chester ran with the red life-blood of him pumping through heart and veins and arteries until he slacked his gait, fell into quick step, and turned a corner with a back glance at the dingy bastile he had broken from with a wrench of bars and a mad scramble over a brick wall.

The crowd was slow in gathering speed—but like slow things it seemed relentless with its surge and pursuit; a seething torrent of indignant Britishers bent on seeing justice done in the trifling matter of breaking jail.

Another trifle, caught in that swift back-glance, struck the fugitive as being incongruous—there was Sir Richard, Chief of the Criminal Intelligence Department, on the steps of Vine Street Gaol, coolly lighting a cigaret. Chester had a world of admiration for Sir Richard—the best thief-taker in all of London.

Soon the police would take the trail—the gum-shoe runners and little MacKeenon, the Scot, and Althorpe with a ferret scent that would probably lead them to the house in Portman Square where Chester wanted to go—did go, after endless twisting, turning, riding on busses and in cabs that rattled through empty streets in a hare and hounds game of violent escape.

Number four Portman Square was partly lighted when Chester reached it and mounted a flight of well-scrubbed steps.

The burly butler who came to the door saw a slender, gray-haired young man clearly outlined against the street lamps.

"Tell your master a man from America is calling," said Chester. "Tell him that!"

The master had given orders; Chester was allowed to enter a somber hall which led straight to a low-beamed room at the back of the mansion—a room in a million.

It was such a room where empire builders dream out their days or big men plan empires—a fit setting for enterprises of large nature. Chester passed the bull-necked butler, brushed aside the portières, and faced, across a mahogany table, the master who was expecting a man from America.

"If it's safe to talk," said Chester, "I'll tell you just what delayed me."

Over the table loomed a bald dome, yellow features drawn into wrinkles, and slate-gray eyes—covered by opal glasses fixed to protruding ears with gold hooks. Maximilian Agnew rose and displayed to Chester a further view of his figure, wrapped in a silver-black sack.

"Who sent you?"

Chester heard the butler's deep cough behind the portières—a guarding signal that the servant of the master was standing by.

"Who sent me, sir, but the one you told to send me—Arnold, whom I met last week at

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Ascot. I have the stickers with me—the stamps from the Museum. Hard work I had getting them for you, and then, when I was arrested and taken to Vine Street—you perhaps heard about that—the confounded British bobbies didn't search me to the skin."

Maximilian Agnew's fingers gripped the table's edge; he leaned toward Chester—

"What are your *aliases?*"

The question struck Chester as a fair one, considering the fact that he was now doing business with the greatest crook in London—the despair of Vine Street—a collector who was credited with the finest collection of coins, stamps and other unidentifiable articles that came under the head of *"lost beyond recovery."*

"My *aliases* were known to Arnold, and if Arnold, whom I met at Ascot—the man who suggested that you wanted certain stamps from the British Museum—told you, then you will perhaps recall that I'm known as Lord Southby, Francis Pope and Richard Letchmere. Over in America they sometimes call me 'the White Owl.'

"You say you were arrested?"

"Yes, —— it man, yes! I hid in the Museum last night, crawled out from behind my hiding-place—a mummy-case by the way—went through the guards—there were at least ten of them—and jimmied open the South African stamp-case. I knew what you wanted—and I got them; a triangular Cape of Good Hope stamp, five Orange Free States stamps, two of the Natal issue of 1893. They're adhering to my skin right now, and if you'll come across with the thousand guineas Arnold told me the job was worth, they're yours."

"But how did you escape from Vine Street?"

"How? What a foolish question, Mr. Agnew. I'm an American. Do you think a British hold-over with soft iron bars and bricks could contain me? Why, frankly, I once tunneled my way out of Sing Sing—a hard jail!"

Maximilian appeared to be satisfied. He glanced toward the hidden butler and clapped his dry hands twice.

Chester stood on the tips of his toes, ready to spring sidewise or backward, or make a closing lunge over the table at Agnew who had signaled the butler for some reason; a reason that became apparent when steps were heard in the hall and a slender, secretarial-looking girl appeared and glided to the master's side.

"Sit down over there," ordered Agnew.

He pointed a rigid finger toward a great, easy chair. The girl, scarcely noticing Chester, went over the rug, turned, gathered her skirts and sat down. Then her eyes, greenish-blue, were on the visitor.

"Miss Lucile," said the master by way of introduction.

Chester, cap bunched in hand, bowed politely, leaned against the table and allowed his heels to touch the rug. He heard, behind the portières, the deep breathing of the watchful butler. They all—girl, Agnew, butler, and casement-windowed room—resembled a trap of the superior order.

A Sèvres clock ticked, London roared somewhere outside—other sounds came to the fugitive, who waited for Agnew to speak. There was the wealth of many thousands in that room; in mahogany cases, deep bookshelves, cunningly fastened drawers. Some of the coins, vases, paintings were undoubtedly spoils, unidentified, purchased from crooks.

"Your references," said Agnew dryly, "are in the main satisfactory. Arnold knows me. He wouldn't have sent a bungler. You say you were caught, and escaped. Miss Lucile will examine the stamps. If they are satisfactory you are to remain here while she hides them.

"After they are hidden where no man can find them, you will be paid the sum mentioned. But first the stamps."

CHESTER looked toward the waiting girl.

The light from a soft cluster over the polished table brought out her features distinctly; she was perhaps thirty years of age, English-appearing, with prominent nose, firm lips and haunted, large eyes, back of which was an expression Chester did not exactly fathom. He noted keenly that her hands were ink-stained, her fingers coiled around a fountain pen when she rose from the chair and came toward him.

"The stickers," he suggested, "are in a place which requires undressing. I call them stickers from the American argot."

Agnew came from around the table, pointed toward a Japanese screen, suggestively tapped one pocket of his silver-and-black sack as if a weapon lay there, then said—

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"Get behind the screen; disrobe; remember, no tricks—see if he is armed, Lucile."

The girl timidly moved her hands over Chester's clothing, stopping at the bottom of his trousers.

"No gun," said she when she straightened her lithesome figure and looked squarely at Agnew.

Chester backed away from the collector, went behind the screen, took off his coat and shirt, pulled down his underwear and removed the adhering stamps from under his arms where they had been hidden prior to his escape from Vine Street Gaol. He dressed, pushed the screen aside, looked swiftly at a cabinet filled with vials, herbs and capsules near one corner of the room, then confronted Agnew and Lucile, who had been whispering together. The girl inclined toward the table when Agnew snatched the stamps from Chester's extended right palm.

"Only eight stamps—eight," he muttered, turning them over, slanting them under the light, examining the cancellation marks. "Eight stamps for one thousand guineas."

"They're yours for a trifle less," said Chester. "I'll give them to you for one thousand pounds. Consider, Mr. Agnew, that I am a marked man in London, from now on. The City isn't safe, and I'll need money enough to go back to the States."

Agnew drew down the gray thatch over his eyes, adjusted his opal glasses and toyed with the eight stamps calculatingly. He raised a shrewd, hard glance to Chester, then extended the stamps toward the waiting girl.

"They're genuine. This is no fraud, miss. Do you pronounce them genuine?"

The girl needed a third glance before she nodded her head almost imperceptibly.

"They're genuine, sir. The Natal issues are priceless."

Agnew frowned and acted as if Chester might raise the price for the stamps.

"Genuine perhaps, but we know there are forgeries even in the British Museum."

"Or frauds in high places," said Chester, smilingly glancing at the room and the girl, who answered his stare with a pathetic, beaten expression seen in social slaves.

The master took the stamps from the girl, laid them face upward on the polished table, drew toward himself a chair and sat down, where the dull gleam of two brass knobs indicated a drawer. His fingers strayed over the stamps, then dropped to the knobs; the drawer was pulled out; a revolver lay in his rising palm, which extended toward Chester.

"A mild precaution," said Agnew. "Now, Lucile, while I have this young man covered and Algar is guarding the only exit, you go up-stairs and bring down the nursery book on the third shelf near the closet. The book," added Agnew, "about *Jack the Giant Killer*."

The girl was gone through the portières, swiftly. Chester waited, watching the gun's rigid menace.

Details came to Chester, and his keen, roving eyes noted that the table between him and Agnew was not large, could be overturned in case the dealer played false. Then there were other trifles in that room to attract attention, such as a silver-plated telephone over a teak-wood stool, a cabinet filled with decanters, an antique desk with mellow glass in its doors, and behind the glass, mucilage, brushes and scraps of adhesive paper evidently used to fasten stamps in books.

"Confine your attention to this gun!" rasped Agnew. "Keep your eyes quiet. You act like a detective."

Chester displayed quick anger.

"See here! You wanted the stamps; Arnold told me it was an easy way to make a thousand guineas; I took the chances, got caught, escaped. Call up Vine Street and see if I didn't make a getaway."

Agnew's fingers closed more firmly around the butt of the revolver. There was level menace and suspicion in the great dealer's glance.

"You probably left a trail as broad as Kensington Road from Vine Street to Portman Square. What assurance have I that the metropolitan police won't be knocking on my front door and asking for you? Why should I buy the stamps you brought when I may be called upon to give them up, and you with them?"

"Oh, come now, Sir Maximilian! This is a little affair between gentlemen. Pay me the money and I'll go my way."

Chester's manner grew confidingly soft; he leaned over the table, locked glances with Agnew, then heard behind him the rustle of Lucile's dress and the deep voice of the burly butler—on guard if ever a man stood guard.

The girl came into the room, bearing under her arm a huge book which she opened between Chester and Agnew on the table.

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Chester saw many dusty leaves turned by Lucile's ink-stained fingers. She stopped at a picture of *Jack the Giant-Killer* slaying a giant, pulled on the page and drew out from a cunningly designed binding a thinner sheet upon which was pasted nine rare stamps of the Natal issue.

"My little hiding-place," chuckled Agnew. "This book has been overlooked by two or three spies sent by Scotland Yard to my house in the guise of servants. I'm always under suspicion," added the dealer.

Chester watched Lucile cross the room, open the desk, and return with a small pot of mucilage and a brush. She sorted the two Natal stamps from the others, rapidly affixed a thin strip of paper with the mucilage and pasted the stamps in their place marked on the sheet. Agnew laid down the gun and rubbed his hands with a dry, scaly motion.

"Almost complete," he said when Lucile pulled out other pages and pasted more stamps in place. "I've the greatest collection in existence—not even the Prince of Wales' can match mine!"

Lucile brushed back her hair and looked fixedly at Chester. There came into the girl's eyes a warning—a side-expression to watch Agnew and the polished gun near the dealer's hand. Chester felt that he had in the girl an ally, although a frightened one, whose inmost heart was timid.

Two thoughts gripped him and caused concern. Why had Agnew allowed the girl to bring from the nursery a book which would prove most damning if captured by the police? Did Agnew plan murder after the stamps were safe in their hiding-place?

Lucile's manner was altogether disquieting. When Agnew had finished gloating over the book and closed it with a loud slam, the girl moved away from the table and shaded her face from the slanting rays of the room's central cluster. Chester raised on tiptoes, watching Agnew, heard the butler's deep breathing as if he, too, expected something to happen.

"You want your money?" snapped the dealer. "One thousand pounds!"

"Certainly," answered Chester, on guard.

Agnew picked up the gun, thrust his chin upward and glanced toward Lucile.

"Get his Bank of England notes from my strong-box."

Lucile moved away and vanished toward the front of the room where there were shadows. Chester heard the turning of a safe's dial, then the slight creak of an opening door.

"You're a poor thief," said Agnew. "But remember this, Letchmere, *alias* ever so many names, there's no use poaching on me if you are ever caught. The book with the stamps will go into a safe hiding-place; my secretary is always mute and the man outside has been with me for nineteen years. Now——"

There sounded, as Lucile was approaching Agnew with a sheaf of bank-notes in her hand, the low tinkling of a telephone-bell. It was repeated, more loudly. Chester, Agnew and the girl faced the instrument, like three quick animals.

THE collector half rose from the table, still gripping the gun, bowed his head, then strode jerkily across the room and lifted the instrument.

"What is it?" he asked testily.

Chester watched Agnew's face grow dark; and the hands of the man trembled.

Suddenly the telephone instrument went down and Agnew moved away from the wall until he reached the central table where he raised the gun and leveled it at Chester's heart.

"Get up your hands. All the way up!"

Chester did as directed and heard the girl sob a warning, a weak protest against murder.

"A trifle beat you!" declared Agnew. "I've word from a police spy that Letchmere is safe in Vine Street Station, and that you are a young inspector sent out in that thief's place. I see the trap—a fine one. Hold your hands up while I reconstruct what happened."

Agnew's features twisted with thought. He looked from Chester to Lucile who fingered the bank-notes helplessly. The sharp eyes of the collector leveled over the revolver sights—his trigger-finger slightly contracted.

"A clever, clever game," mused he. "Letchmere, whom Arnold saw at Ascot, went about the business of robbing the British Museum. He was caught and taken to Vine Street, where Sir Richard undoubtedly planned a substitute for him in order to trap me. You, the substitute, were given the stamps which you affixed to your skin, and you pretended to escape with the

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assistance of the authorities. Of course, now that you have seen everything, you won't get out of this room alive. Algar!"

The butler came immediately from behind the portières, and approached Agnew.

"This fellow is a fraud, Algar. He has seen too much. I unwittingly allowed him to dupe me in the matter of new stamps. Could you dispose of his body if I shoot him down?"

The girl backed against the wall and pressed her thin hands on her breast.

"Don't!" she cried.

Chester tore his glance from the menacing revolver and stared at the little clock which set on a cabinet. It was thirty minutes before the hour when the police would draw a net about Number four Portman Square. Sir Richard might be too late in the matter of raiding the house—a plan set for emergency in case no word was phoned into Vine Street Station.

"You're dead wrong!" declared Chester with American emphasis. "I'm no spy or substitute. I'm Arnold's friend! You have been misinformed!"

Agnew opened a thin set of dry lips.

"That's easily verified. You say you are Arnold's friend, that you met him at Ascot, that he told you I would give one thousand guineas for the stamps you brought here. Well an' good, young man! What description can you give me of Arnold? What has he on the side of his face?"

Chester saw the trifle that would undoubtedly defeat Sir Richard's plan. The American prisoner at Vine Street had confessed concerning a certain Arnold, met with at the Ascot races. Neither Sir Richard, or MacKeenon or Althorpe with a ferret's brain had thought to ask Arnold's description. Agnew's question was a facer.

"Arnold," guessed Chester, "has a small blue mark on the side of his face—a scar."

"You lie! He has no mark at all!"

The room, the scowling butler, the cringing girl and the old spectacled man who held the revolver so skilfully, became laden with death. Chester closed his eyes—he expected to hear the sharp report of the gun—to receive the blow at the heart from a bullet.

"Algar!"

Agnew's voice was demanding:

"Algar," he said, "go to the front-door and see if any one is lurking outside. Come back immediately!"

"Now," added the collector, "you, Letchmere, move against that wall. Stand facing me with your hands raised. I'm going to shoot you if you as much as lower one hand an inch. You, Lucile, run up-stairs with the book. Put it in the usual place."

Chester was alone in the great room with Agnew who certainly handled the revolver carelessly. A tiring thing it was, holding one's hands high overhead; Chester's gaze roamed the walls opposite for some view through a window. He stared blankly at the tiny circle of steel and Agnew's cold, glass-covered eyes sighting over the barrel. The philatelist had seated himself at the table, his elbow resting on the edge near the glue-pot and scraps of adhesive papers used to affix the stamps in the book.

Algar came lurching through the portières.

"No sign of any gum-shoe runners, sir," he declared. "There's a policeman on the Square——"

"There's none of them on the square!" exclaimed Agnew.

Then the collector grinned at his own humor. The revolver lowered an inch, raised, covered Chester's heart; steadied suggestively.

Lucile tiptoed in and stood with folded hands.

"You secreted the stamp-book where the police are not likely to get it?" snapped Agnew.

"Y—es."

Agnew's manner became brusk. He partly rose from his chair, lowered the revolver, and glared across the room at Chester.

"You spy! Your hour has come! You know too much, young man. How will you meet your death?"

Chester concluded swiftly that Agnew was partly mad, for the collector made as if to have the matter over with a swift shot, which could scarcely miss at the short distance—perhaps twenty feet. The ticking, little Sèvres clock showed that it would be some time before Sir Richard's prearranged reenforcements arrived. Chester jerked his hands higher when he saw the revolver leveled. He noted the girl's fingers covering her bowed face, while Algar stood with folded arms, and a deep scowl on his expectant features.

The clock ticked on, until Agnew lowered instead of firing the revolver.

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"If I shoot him it'll make a noise," mumbled the collector. "I've thought of a better way. We'll leave it to fate whether he goes free or not."

"Oh, let him go," sobbed Lucile.

"Shut up, you jade!"

Chester poised on his toes, calculated the chances of leaping across the room and grappling with Agnew. They were slight, for the table intervened.

He concluded, while he counted the seconds, that Lucile would never turn informer on Agnew in case of murder. The girl was weak; swayed by a dominant, crafty mind. Algar, on the other hand, resembled a thug from some Rotherhithe pub—dressed up in butler's guise. He had a hard eye, like his master.

"We'll give you an even chance for your life," said Agnew. "Lucile, bring that little red box from my cabinet. Algar, serve port in two wine-glasses. See that both glasses are exactly the same. I'm going to send this police spy out of here so that the poison he chooses burns his throat before he can peach on me—or else he goes free. We'll abide by his own luck."

Chester watched Lucile remove a key from a hiding-place in a vase and open the cabinet near the Japanese screen. She came across the rug and set a little red box on the table. Agnew shifted the revolver to his right hand, opened the box, and took out one red pill. He closed the box and shoved it near the mucilage-pot and adhesive papers.

"This pill," he said—while he held it up for Chester's inspection—"is a toxic dose for one man; a blend of cyanid and morphia. It readily dissolves in port-wine."

Algar parted the portières and came in bearing a silver tray upon which were two fragile, thin-stemmed, wide-bottomed glasses partly filled with a ruddy port. He set the tray, at Agnew's orders, upon the table and stood to one side, watching Chester.

"Fix up his drink!" ordered Agnew to Lucile. "Put that pill in one of the two glasses; let it thoroughly dissolve, then cover the glasses with anything; a serviette or scarf. This police spy can take his choice—under the scarf. He will have one chance out of two to live!"

The revolver pointed to Chester's heart, he saw, with startled eyes, the girl drop a pill from trembling fingers into one of the glasses, then, while Agnew chuckled madly, she moved the glasses over the table, apparently wiped the bottoms of each one and searched about for a scarf which Algar found and brought to her. It was a lace affair, with a large centerpiece.

MANY thoughts raced through Chester's mind. It was but ten minutes of the time Sir Richard had promised reenforcement at Number four Portman Square. There was little chance of the police breaking into the house without a thorough outside inspection. The butler guarded the only exit from the room; Lucile had covered the glasses with the scarf; Agnew now stood erect, his form quivering within the black and silver sack, while the revolver pointed directly across the room.

"I'll shoot after I count ten," said Agnew determinedly. "I don't want to smear up a perfectly woven Indian rug with your yellow blood. Come here, you spy! Reach under the scarf and take one of those two glasses! Drink it down quickly. Remember—no tasting. Gulp it!"

Chester shot a helpless glance at the girl who crouched near the opposite wall. Something in her side-expression—a weak signal that all was well—nerved him. He lowered his hands an inch or more, faced the revolver and walked to the table.

"That's right!" said Agnew. "Now, stand still. I've got you covered at seven feet, maybe eight. You can die by bullet, poison or go free. Reach under the scarf and pick up a glass. You, Algar, stand ready to open those portières for this man. He better take his cap with him; there it is on a chair. The poison will not act for thirty seconds—time enough to rid the house of his body."

Again, as a flash, Chester caught a reassuring signal from the cringing girl. She seemed to say, "Do as the master directs, and everything will come out all right."

Chester closed his lips, glared at Agnew and the gun, lifted one corner of the scarf and felt blindly for the two glasses.

A chill ran up his fingers and paralyzed his arm. He touched both glasses; one moved slightly, the other was firmly fixed to the table. It would not move. Cold sweat came over Chester's forehead. He glanced from Agnew to Lucile. The girl turned her face away until it was in deep shadow.

"I'm counting ten," suggested Agnew.

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"I'm at seven. Drink—pull out one of the glasses, or I'll fire!"

Chester's mind flashed back; he recalled that the girl had done something with the mucilage-pot when she placed the two glasses in position under the scarf. Evidently she had glued the glass filled with poison to the table. It wouldn't move!

He pulled out the other glass, lifted it, felt the scarf drop upon his shoes, and stared at Agnew.

"Drink heartily," said the cold-blooded dealer. "Drink to life or death, you spy!"

The gun steadied between Chester's eyes; he touched the glass to this lips, uplifted it, swallowed the wine, then turned and strode toward Algar, who opened the portières, tendered him his cap and bowed stiffly.

"Good-by!" said Agnew mockingly. "Don't be too sure you're going to live, young man. Don't think—if you do live—that the police and Sir Richard will be able to find any evidence here. I'll take care the stamps are hidden."

Chester reeled slightly, pulled his cap over his eyes, then turned and looked back through the portières. Agnew stood, revolver in hand, while by the collector's side showed the untasted glass of port-wine, containing the poison in solution.

There sounded, while Chester stared at Agnew, the shrill notes of a silver whistle, somewhere outside the house.

Sir Richard of Vine Street had waited long enough; the mansion was surrounded by police.

Chester's courage came back to him; he felt the floor shake and heard axes crashing against the front and back doors. Voices called; commands in police brevity echoed from everywhere.

Algar, at an order from his master, lunged into the hall, brushed Chester down to his knees, and made for the staircase, up which he climbed, two steps at a time. He met, on the topmost step, with opposition in the form of two constables who had broken through an upper window. The three men rolled down the stairs in a snarling ball of hate.

Agnew, realizing then that the stolen stamps would be found by a thorough search, jerked the revolver, fired twice toward Chester, wheeled partly away from the table and flashed the room with other shots directed at the rear windows. Glass tinkled, Lucile screamed and threw herself in one corner where she crouched out of line of fire.

Chester saw the vivid picture—the enraged old man—the prone girl—the police faces at the windows. He advanced toward Agnew, using whatever shelter he could find—the portières, a chair's high back, a cabinet. He bent his knees, swayed on tiptoes; prepared to close with Agnew. Out went his hands when the last shot left the revolver. Then came a command in a deep voice for surrender. Agnew whirled the revolver, dashed it in Chester's face, leaned, and snatched at the glass upon the table.

It was frozen to the varnish.

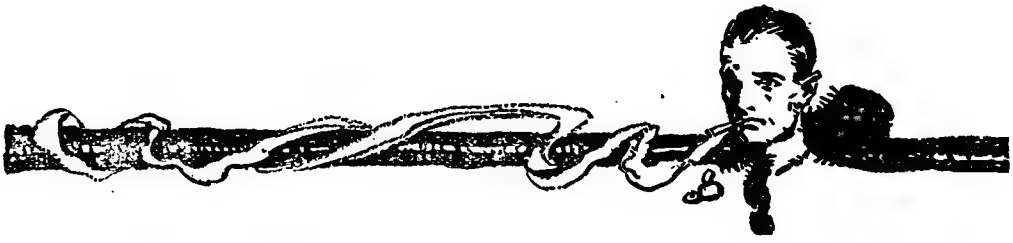
Livid from disappointment the dealer grasped the table's edge, strained, lifted the table, inclined—inch by inch—the edge of the glass to his lips.

It was an effort such as only a crazed man could exert. The port-wine spilled down an eager throat, the table crashed over with Agnew under it; there came, past the staring Chester, a dapper figure—Sir Richard of Vine Street.

The Chief Inspector looked at Agnew's twisted features; then at Lucile who moaned in one corner of the room. He wheeled upon Chester.

"What's th' matter with that fellow?"

"Poison," said Chester. "He took his own dose—but I think we've got the girl to thank for that!"



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Lost Diggings

A FIVE-PART STORY

PART III.

By Hugh Pendexter

Author of "The Floating Frontier," "The Bushfighters," etc.

The first part of the story briefly retold in story form.

WHEN Shoshoni Hale, carrying a rifle and two hand-guns, came into the Boise Basin on the trail of his stolen mare he ran into one thing after another. The first was "Old Idaho," who was reported to have found the famous Lost Diggings, and who met him with no hospitality.

"Don't hanker to have no strange men around my granddarter," said the mountain-man, but Hale stayed long enough at the little cabin to meet Harriet Prescott, who looked like a boy in her buckskin clothes, before he went on down to Boise City.

A gold-mad town was Boise City, Idaho Territory, in this Summer of 'Sixty-five, and a town in which the ordinary processes of justice were reversed, for the power of the law was in the hands of evil men. Shoshoni learned this when he found his horse stalled in a livery stable as the property of Ferd Patterson, gambler, and went to court to try to get the mare back.

After a farcical examination Judge Curks was about to deny all his claims, apparently, when a small, dapper man appeared and said in a shrill voice—

"Just a minute, please."

Judge Curks squirmed and muttered—

"Always glad to hear from Ben Riply."

Ben Riply, of the Payette Committee, symbolized the silent justice that struck without warning, that left its mark—"XXX"—placarded on more than one dangling victim, and that would not hesitate to apply its corrective methods to those in high places. He got Shoshoni his horse and advised him to leave town.

Shoshoni needed no such advice. In the rear of the court-room he had seen a bearded face raised above the crowd, and a hand pressed against the right cheek and shoved sharply upward. He broke into a cold sweat of fear.

From the town in which he had made enemies of Ferd Patterson and his gang Shoshoni Hale headed directly for Idaho City, where he had two friends, Jack Gorman and ex-Sheriff Pinkham. As he rode along he heard a hoarse voice—

"Hands up."

It was the Jem Helm gang, looking for Lucky Tom, a miner who had thrown Boise City into great excitement, and had almost got himself lynched, by refusing to tell the location of rich diggings he had discovered. Hale had helped him escape.

After taking his pouch of dust the Helm gang let Shoshoni go, and he rode on, to run into Lucky Tom himself.

"You're welcome as whisky," said the old prospector, and they made camp together.

Next morning two mysterious shots from the bushes killed Lucky Tom. Before he died he signed over his claim to Hale.

"Man! Man!" sobbed Shoshoni. "I brought death to you. They took you for me."

Shoshoni buried Tom and rode on to Idaho City. He found the town gone crazy over diamonds. Governor Lyons had reported in the East that the Territory was rich with precious stones. No one had found any yet but that made no difference.

In the street Hale met his friend Pinkham.

"Look out for Patterson," warned the ex-sheriff. "What you tell me about Lucky Tom makes me think you better hole up in the hills for a while. Patterson's crowd may even try to use Tom's death against you."

But Hale's departure was delayed. That afternoon the turbulent town became strangely still. Word had gone about—

"Patterson and Shoshoni Hale are meeting up."

Gambler and mountain man faced each other in the frontier street. But there was no duel. A

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man shot at Hale from behind. Warned, Shoshoni got him first. Patterson walked away.

That night a mob formed in the streets. Lucky Tom's body had been found. Remembering with a chill Pinkham's words, Hale asked a man whom the lynchers were after.

"Ferd Patterson for killing Pinkham a few hours ago!"

Hale did not wait to learn the outcome of this. He rode to the mountains with news for Old Idaho.

"Idaho City accuses you of passing counterfeit gold dust." Hale, Old Idaho and his granddaughter thought it best to hide. They went to the Lost Gulch Lucky Tom had given Hale. With them they took an Indian friend of Shoshoni's—Black Cloud, who was very despondent, because he had lost his medicine.

Hale left them and went back to Idaho's cabin. Three men rode past him in the night, and one spoke words that sent a thrill of fear through Shoshoni—

"We'll soon be leading him over the rim of the basin."

He fired three shots at them but missed. He remembered the signal he had seen passed in the court-room. The Danites were after Shoshoni Hale.

Then he went to Idaho's cabin and destroyed evidence of the manufacture of counterfeit dust. The half-demented old man had confessed that he was guilty. This done, Shoshoni Hale rode on to Placerville, his most important errand still before him.

CHAPTER VII

HUNTING THE SHADOWS

LATE in the afternoon Hale hobbled the pony in a thicket and hid his belt and one revolver along with his rifle. With one gun concealed inside his shirt he walked to the town and entered the first store. The miners had not yet returned from their work and the store had but one customer. Making his way to the back of the store, Hale watched the proprietor and the customer and decided that neither of the men suspected his identity. He had not believed there was much chance of being recognized either in Placerville or Centerville unless it be by some citizen from Idaho City.

The storekeeper came to wait on him and it required but a few minutes to select a pair of trousers, a pair of boots, a hickory shirt and a hat. He asked a few questions about the Owyhee country and imparted the information he had just arrived from over the mountains. Returning to the pony he shifted into his new clothes and wrapped his mountain dress about his rifle and left the bundle where he could quickly recover it. Then, belting on one gun and thrusting the other into his boot he rode back into Placerville.

The town claimed a population of six thousand people and was distinct from other towns in the Boise basin in that it resembled a Spanish settlement in the arrangement of its business section. The stores and saloons faced upon a plaza. It was the beginning of twilight when Hale returned to the square. The worrying west winds no longer sent spirals of dust a thousand feet into the air, and the heat of the day already was being sucked up into the cloudless spaces.

Hale selected an eating-house where business was dull and seated himself at a corner table and ordered elk steak, bread and coffee. The Mexican who waited on him accepted him as a miner and in broken English asked the usual questions. For the benefit of the bartender across the room Hale gruffly announced he was from the Hell Gate diggings and had crossed the mountains by the Lolo trail, and had tried the Lolo and Oro Fino Rivers, only to find all the promising benches were taken up. Now he was working south to the Owyhee district and was anxious to learn the stage tariff to Ruby City as he had been compelled to buy a new outfit and was short of money. The bartender lazily aroused himself and volunteered the desired information. It was too early for the evening rush and there were only four other customers in the place, three at a table and one at the bar.

Hale shifted his remarks from the waiter to the bartender and explained:

"I'd like to git down to the Uintah Mountains after I look over the Owyhee country, but I reckon the Mormons have that place pretty well settled?"

"Nothing worth while has been struck in the Uintah range this season," oracularly informed the bartender. "But if a man does find something good down there his best game is to hitch up with some Mormon, one that stands high in the church, as a partner. Some one like Mushet or Burnham."

Hale drank his coffee and remarked:

"When I say the Uintahs it don't mean I'd meander round wholesale over the whole range. Feller up on the Lolo River showed me some specimens. Told me just where he got 'em. They looked mighty good. If he didn't lie about 'em, and I could work the

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diggings without being bothered by the church I'd try it. He wanted me to go down there with him, but he got into a fight and was plugged."

"Tod Mushet's close to Brigham Young. So's his partner, West Burnham. If you have anything worth drawing to they might take you in. Reckon the man with the specimens didn't stick to work the diggin's along of not taking in the right kind of a partner. Of course they run him out," said the bartender between yawns.

"Reckon it'll be more of a case of me taking 'em in," grumbled Hale.

"Play your hand," mumbled the bartender wearily.

"I'll try it alone afore I'll go to Salt Lake. I wouldn't go down there again even to git Brigham himself as a partner," declared Hale.

"You don't have to go there to see Mushet and Burnham. They're over to Idaho City if they ain't dug out within a day or so."

"Mebbe they wouldn't want to quit their business up here to go with me," suggested Hale.

This amused the bartender hugely.

"Go with you? 'S'pose they'd go tramping over the Uintahs to see if you really had something? They'd give you a line in writing, saying they was equal partners with you. Then they'd send some one along to keep tabs on you. If you struck something you'd do all the work and they'd claim their share. And take it, too. Mushet and Burnham don't swing a pick no more."

"At Idaho City, eh?" mused Hale.

"Oh, I ain't no newspaper. I only know they was there, and that they come through with the sheriff 'bout two weeks ago."

"I don't know as they be much good as partners, if they're already in trouble with your sheriff."

"They ain't had no trouble with the sheriff," growled the bartender. "Didn't you fall and hurt your head when a child? How in —— could they have any say as to who can prospect in the Uintahs if they was in trouble up here. The di'mon' talk has been holding 'em up this way."

The man at the bar nodded his approval of this caustic speech and decided the man from the Hell Gate diggings was thick-headed. The bartender believed himself to be in excellent form and lowered contemptuously at Hale.

Hale meekly reminded—

"It was all along of your saying they was with the sheriff."

"Well, I'll be ——! Can't you sabe they was with him because they know him? They're friends of his. Don't you know a sheriff can have a few friends and go riding with 'em? The sheriff was after a old gray rat who's been making gold dust faster'n the Esmeralda can produce it. Sheriff rode out to bag him. Mushet and Burnham went along to see the fun."

"That di'mon' talk made by Lyon has fetched lots of Boise City men up here," spoke up the man at the bar.

"Don't I know that?" querulously retorted the bartender. "Tell us something new. Friend of Mushet's is along with him. Don't know his name. Reckon he ain't any great shucks apart from 'em. Just a hired man. But Mushet and Burnham are two high-steppers in the church. Hate to git 'em on my track when they was mad."

"Bet I've seen Mushet!" cried Hale, slapping a hand on the table. "Tod Mushet. Sure I've seen him. Seen him year ago last Spring near Salt Lake. Big broad shouldered cuss with black whiskers that he always wears cut straight across like a spade and——"

"Like —— you've seen him!" jeered the bartender. "He's got long thin whiskers, like a goat. Color of ruby silver. Some of the boys call him the 'Goat'—behind his back. When he first struck Idaho City some two weeks ago a feller went up to him and yanked the end of his whiskers and said, 'ba-a-a.' He come within a hair of having his throat cut. If Burnham hadn't grabbed Mushet and yanked him back and softened him down by saying the poor fool was drunk, he'd 'a' had that feller's blood. The way he pulled that bowie-knife from his boot was a caution—so every one said who seen him do it." And for a moment the speaker's dull eyes glowed with a bit of life.

"Mebbe it was Burnham I was thinking of," mused Hale apologetically. "Both names remind me strong of Salt Lake and the hot springs outside. I dunno; mebbe it was Burnham after all."

"Burnham ain't got no black whiskers. Might 'a' had some once. Now it's only a little fringe of gray under his chin. His long mustache 's the same color. He's a funny looking galoot, but don't never go out your way to tell him so."

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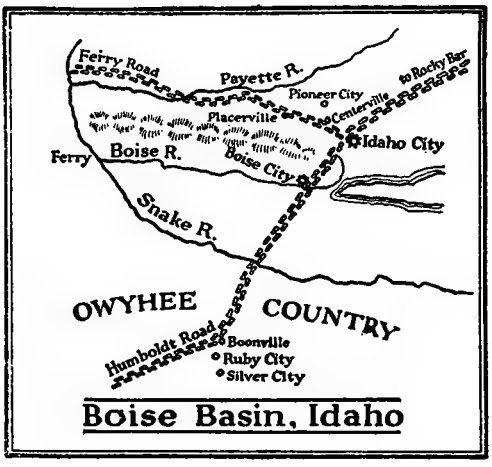
"I'm a prospector. I ain't no trouble-hunter."

"You pack a likely-looking gun," remarked the bartender.

"Bought it before quitting the Hell Gate country. There's a heap of talk about Injuns on t'other side of the Bitter Root range. Blackfeet swear they'll kill all white men. When it comes to a fight, if the other feller'll fight fair, I'd rather have a pick-ax. There's a weapon that hurts with both ends, and never misses fire, and is always loaded."

Other customers now straggled in and engaged the bartender's attention. Hale paid his score and lounged out to the plaza and mounted.

A SMASHING ten mile ride and he was drawing rein in Centerville, known as the "prettiest" town in the basin. But night now concealed its charms and Hale saw only the lighted windows. He knew there was scarcely any chance of either Mushet or Burnham being in Centerville, but he wished to be thorough in his search and make sure they were ahead and never behind him. So he walked his



Boise Basin, Idaho

pony to a gaming-hall and dismounted and surveyed the gathering through a window. Men with beards of all colors and patterns were grouped about the tables or ranged along the bar.

The mental pictures he had drawn of Mushet and Burnham grew confused. He began to doubt his ability to identify absolutely the two Mormons from the bartender's description. He did know that the bearded face he had glimpsed in the Boise City court-room did not agree with either description. By observing the clothing and disheveled condition of the men in the hall he was positive all were hard-working miners and gamblers. There was no mistaking the two classes.

His quarry would not be toil-stained nor dressed like sharpers. He also knew he would be aided in his task in Idaho City by watching Sheriff Bowen and his friends. In that familiar circle he was sure to find his suspects. Through the sheriff and Patterson he would locate Mushet and Burnham. Through watching the two Mormons he would soon learn the identity of the third man. Yet he visited other drinking and gaming places so as to remove all doubt.

Swinging into the saddle, he took the road to Idaho City, still filled with an indomitable purpose. He had faced about to grapple with the shadows, impelled by the careless words of Harry Idaho. Already he fancied he felt the shackles slipping from his soul.

About a mile from town he hobbled the pony in a small gulch back from the road and covered the remaining distance on foot. The night life of the town was at full blast. From gaming-halls and saloons came the sound of furious merriment, emphasized by the shrill, mechanical laughter of women. Groups of late arrivals from outlying placers were jostling along to their favorite haunts; and there were counter-currents of those ready to turn in for a few hours sleep before the morning fires were re-kindled beyond the Bitter Root range.

Men streamed by him with eager stride, or with unsteady steps, and every bearded face might be the one he saw in the court-room. He began to fear it would be impossible to find his quarry in the short time afforded before the coming of the sun. To eliminate one man but leave two unknown to track and slay from behind was not his plan.

They had ruthlessly slain his father and made his boyhood a period of hiding, and with scant ruth would he strike back. But he was discovering that what had seemed simple of execution back in the gulch was in reality most difficult. Were he free to enter the different places of amusement, subject only to the chance of assassination, his purpose would have continued inexorable.

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But this lurking along the streets and hoping to make positive identification by glances snatched at a procession of faces which looked all alike was most futile. This method of attack, he began to concede, placed the odds against him. Despite his miner's garb he might be recognized at any moment; the man now brushing against him might have a knife for him.

Miss Harry had as much as said that his readiness to flee was only a frame of mind and not a necessity. Now the old shrinking back from the unknown was upon him again. Could he stalk them in the hill country and play a grim game of hide and seek until the score was complete he would not fear the issue, though it be death for him.

But the town and its shifting groups of bearded men bewildered him. He was little used to towns and did not like them because he never had trusted them. He felt out of place. So far as being on his guard was concerned he could not feel more helpless if blindfolded. Any one of the passing roisterers might be an enemy and could as easily strike him dead as if he were a sheep. As his nerves responded to his misgivings he took the inside of the walk and at last halted with his back to the wall.

To locate Mushet and Burnham definitely was simple enough were he free to make inquiry at the different saloons. But to show himself too boldly meant arrest on the charge of murder. And granted he could, by a stroke of luck, achieve the double discovery without being recognized, there would still be left the third man. As he slouched against the wall with hat brim pulled well forward he began to realize how necessary it was for him to have help. What he should have planned as the first step was the getting in touch with Jack Gorman and leaving it for him to locate the game. His own entrance on the scene should be most abrupt, and his rôle should consist purely of the avenger.

"Howdy, old pard," cried a thick voice, and he was startled to find a man standing unsteadily before him and extending the hand of fellowship.

"You're mistaken," growled Hale. "I don't know you."

"Course you don't know me," was the amiable response. "But I know Jack Gorman and 'mire him 'mazingly. Jack's all right. Any friend of his is a friend of mine, from boots to hat brim."

"You're mistaken. I don't know your friend," said Hale, quick to note how a passerby twisted his head about on hearing Gorman's name spoken.

"Ain't that the limit! 'Scuse me, pard. Must be drunker'n a b'iled owl. But when I caught the light shining across the side of your face I'd swear I'd seen you running round with old Jack. No hard feelings?"

"No, no," hurriedly assured Hale, anxious for the fellow to leave him.

But the man was loath to leave. He hooked his thumbs in the waistband of his trousers and rocked back on his heels and gravely attempted to see under Hale's hat brim; and all the time some half-buried conviction was striving to work its way to the front of his befuddled mind. Suddenly he cried out—

"I'm drunk, all right, but, by gawdfry, I ain't no fool. No, sir! Drunk; git over it to-morrer. Fool; never git over it. I ain't no fool."

"You're a man of much sense," soothed Hale, fearing the fellow's eccentric humors would embroil him.

"Truer word was never spoke," slowly declared the man. "And now I've got the hang of it. Knew I couldn't be mistook. You was with Gorman and Sumner Pinkham when I saw you. Why, —— it all! You're Shoshoni Hale!"

Like the bang of a buffalo-gun came the name, and its utterance in Hale's ears seemed to fill the whole town. With a sweep of his right foot he mowed the man's legs from under him and brought him crashing to the ground. As he turned into a cross-street and darted away into the darkness he heard his name, coupled with strong oaths, shouted repeatedly in a hysteria of drunken rage. There was no doubting the publicity his stealthy visit was exciting. And no man could proclaim the name of Shoshoni Hale on the streets of Idaho City without becoming the center of a curious mob.

Cursing the chance that had permitted a drunkard to penetrate his disguise so easily, Hale left the cross-street and turned down Wall and doubled back on this until a few buildings below the point where he had tripped up the inquisitive stranger. Entering a narrow alley-way between Vantine's and another store, he stole close to the danger zone on Main Street.

He thrust out his head and glanced up the

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street. Two score or more of men were gathered about the drunken man. Voices were being raised and the babel threatened to become general if some one had not called for silence. Then Hale heard the man he had tripped passionately declare:

"I'll git even with him! Shoshoni Hale? Thinks I don't know him because he's quit his buckskins. I tell you I seen him the day he was rambling round with Gorman and Pinkham. I was feeling good natur'd and kind. I stopped to say 'howdy' to the cuss, and first thing I knew my heels was higher'n my head. But I'll find him and make him chaw dirt."

"Dressed like what?" demanded a peremptory voice.

"Like any miner, —— him I'll——"

"You'll go home, 'Muggsy,' or I'll lock you up for two months with nary a drink," the strident voice warned. "You boys scatter and look about. Muggsy's drunk but he's still got his eyesight left. There's a thousand dollars for Hale. Remember that. Dave, you hustle to the Gold Dust and pass the word in the back room. Who's seen Gorman within an hour?"

"He's in Kinney's place, playing dominoes. He's been there for four hours. I just come from there," some one replied.

"He isn't in it, then. Rest of you peddle the word Hale's in town. He's bad. Shoot on sight."

Hale edged back as a group of men came toward him. In the passageway were several barrels and Hale dropped behind these and drew his guns. As the men passed the opening the store lights fell on the face of Sheriff Bowen.

Hale ran back to Wall street and lamented his ill-luck. Then he tried to be philosophical, and told himself the chance encounter might have been the means of saving his life. For if the tipsy miner could so easily recognize him how much more quickly would Bowen and his tools detect him. He had started toward the Centerville Road, thinking to mount his pony and ride into the hills, when two words popped into his mind and brought him to a halt. Kinney's place. Jack Gorman was there. Kinney's place was on the same side of the street as Vantine's store.

He turned about and hastened down the street until in the rear of the low structure. Entering between two small stores, he came out at the back of the resort and stole forward to a window and peered in. Gorman was seated at a corner table. He had just finished his last game, for his opponent was leaving.

As Gorman stayed to pack the dominoes in a box Sheriff Bowen turned from the bar and accosted him. The two men talked animatedly and both appeared to be angry. Bowen turned back to the bar and ordered a drink. Gorman rose and went out. Hale stepped to the corner of the building and glimpsed his friend making up the street, presumably for his room.

Realizing his night's risk had been for nothing unless he could reach his friend, Hale returned to Wall and ran swiftly.

He planned to intercept his friend at the Forrest Theater, where the shadows would lie thickly about the darkened building and where a cross-street afforded a line of retreat. He turned from Wall into the short cross-street and gained the theater and crouched low near the entrance. Once before from the same position he had looked down the street and had seen his friend pass through the light shining from Vantine's store. That was when Gorman had learned from Riply that Lucky Tom's body had been found and that Shoshoni Hale was being openly accused of murder.

The scene now repeated itself in part, only this time no Riply was present. But there was Gorman, swinging along the edge of the walk to escape collision with the boisterous. As he neared Hale's hiding-place he entered a zone of shadows and became a blur of a figure. But there was none else approaching the theater, and Hale softly called—

"Jack!"

Without a word Gorman came to a halt and waited.

"Jack!" repeated Hale.

"All right, Shoshoni. I'm on. Keep low, wherever you are. They're trying to trail you. Bowen was just asking me about you."

"I'm here by the door. I must talk with you."

Gorman hesitated for a moment, then directed:

"Go to my room ahead of me. It's unlocked. Don't show a light. I think Bowen is satisfied I knew nothing about your being in town, but I may be followed. If I am I won't go in. You take Wall and I'll go straight. I'll give you time to make it

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ahead of me. The side window is open if you want to duck out in a hurry."

Hale slipped from the doorway and made off. As he left the business section of the town behind him the obscurity of the night increased as very few lights were showing. He heard the rapid clatter of hoofs as some horsemen rode toward the jail, but without hindrance he reached the house where Gorman had the front room on the ground floor.

With all the cunning he had learned from the Indians he reconnoitered the building before venturing to cross the street. His ear against the ground failed to detect any footfalls, but he did catch a faint *thud-thud—thud-thud* of a galloping horse far off in the darkness. He waited until this ominous sound died out in the distance and then removed his boots. Doubling over, he scurried across the road and passed to the side of the house.

He crouched by the open window with drawn gun and listened until satisfied none of his enemies had suspected he might come there and were waiting in ambush. Softly reaching his boots through the window, he slipped in over the sill. He had barely stretched himself out on the floor to await Gorman's coming before he heard men approaching. There were two of them and their voices were loud and angry.

"We'll git him if he's in town. If we'd found him with you we'd 'a' got you."

"Like —— you'd git me, or Shoshoni Hale either!" scornfully retorted Gorman. "I can see you hunting for some of his gun-play. If you want any of mine just step out into the middle of the street with me."

"Time enough for that, Gorman, when I git after you. I'm an officer of the law and I ain't free to take on street-fighting outside my line of duty."

"Officer of the law?" jeered Gorman, halting before his door. "I'll bet you lost no time in hustling Ferd Patterson back to jail when you heard Hale was in town. Any time you feel free to take on some street-fighting just come a-shooting."

Gorman slammed the outside door, hesitated a moment in the little hall and then noisily entered his room.

"You here?" he whispered.

"By the side window."

"Git under the front window and lie flat. I'm lighting up." Hale crawled across the floor and took his position beneath the front window. Gorman lighted a lamp and threw himself into a chair, his back to the window, and put his feet on the table and lighted a pipe. There was no curtain to prevent any one from the street obtaining a view of the room.

"What's your game, Shoshoni?"

"I came to find three Mormons. Mushet and Burnham, and one I don't know by name or sight," whispered Hale.

"I can't crowd into your game, but when you feel like trusting me I'm all ears to take in your talk. I'm playing it blind now. You're after three Mormons, one of 'em unknown. All right. I'm taking cards."

Hale hesitated, fighting down his old instinct to keep his troubles to himself; the impress the hills had left on a boy's plastic mind. Then he said:

"I've told the girl. No reason why I shouldn't tell you except it may draw you into a pack of trouble."

"Cut the cards. I'll be street-fighting with you next. A pack of trouble! Meaning I'm gun-shy?" hissed Gorman without removing his pipe.

Hale told him about his father's death and his own early troubles.

"Ever since that night when I crept away to hide myself it's been at my back, the threat of attack from cover. It's kept me from meeting folks. It's held me to the mountains. The Indians were the only strangers I could trust. Then that sign, the hand against the face in the court-room, told me they'd once more picked up the trail. Riply thought I was afraid; I was, but not of what he had in mind. Pinkham didn't understand some things I said. Poor Pinkham! I planned to tell him everything, same's I have told you tonight. I'm sure Burnham and Mushet are two of 'em. They have a third man with 'em, who's most likely in on it. And I'll never quit jumping at my shadow until I know they're off my trail for good. ——, man! I've slunk behind a scrub pine up in the hills, a hundred miles from nowhere, and watched a prospector limp toward my fire, always thinking it might be one of the killers."

"—— 'em! I'll back your game. Now it begins to make sense. You had me plumb puzzled. Git 'em? Of course you must. But there's one hole in your scheme. Lucky Tom."

Hale grunted a query, and Gorman explained:

"They're laying Tom's death onto you.

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According to your tell he was mistook for you by Mushet's crowd. Then they killed him. One of those cusses ought to be saved out and made to tell the truth so's to clear you."

Hale pondered over this point thoughtfully; then agreed.

"It sounds good. Yes, I must save one of 'em. Still Curks must know the truth, too."

"He'll be harder to get at, but we'll nail one of 'em and make him tell," encouraged Gorman. "You've stirred up the ——'s own mess here tonight. Bowen now believes that drunk had the right of it, and he's picketing the town with some of his gang to stop a fellow of your build and dressed in store-clothes. You must clear out at once. If they make a search and you stick here you're sure to be found."

"I can't dig out before finding my three men," protested Hale.

"Know how you feel. You're tuned up to it now and want action. But Mushet and Burnham went to Boise City yesterday to see Curks. From what I hear they're as crazy as the rest of us over Lyon's diamond talk. Curks will come back with them. I don't know who the third man is. There's several Mormons trailing 'round with 'em at times. Since Pinkham was killed I've kept away from the Gold Dust. Patterson is there almost every night—under guard. He and Bowen and Mushet and Burnham run together a lot. He entertains at the jail, too. Your third galoot probably meets with 'em. But I'll git busy and ask some questions. Where can I git word to you?"

This was something of a problem but Hale finally solved it by suggesting:

"It's quite a ride, but the best place will be Old Idaho's cabin. Under the door-step. If I can't go I can send Black Cloud. But it's a long ride to take."

"No ride's too long to serve a friend. If I can't get away myself I have friends who we can trust to the limit. Now you skip out and I'll send word to the cabin when Burnham and his pard come back. Meantime I'll cast about for the third critter."

"Step into the hall and leave the door open when you come back, and I'll crawl out."

"You make me almost as mad as that fool deputy did," growled Gorman. "That new outfit of yours will give you away. I reckon I had it pretty nigh thought out while coming home."

"My bucksins would 'a' given me away, too."

"You ought to painted up and come as a Injun begging for drinks. There'd been sense in that, and you know how to play the game."

"Couldn't I stay right here, laying low tomorrow while you scout and see if those men come back, then in the evening git into action and have it over with?" anxiously said Hale.

"No. Too risky. You've got a bad name among some of the fools who believe what Bowen tells 'em. If you have to shoot any one in gitting away the whole county would be after you. Lie still! Some one is coming."

Several men were approaching the house. Hale pressed hard against the wall and drew his guns. Gorman rested his head on the back of his chair and laid his revolver across his lap. The steps ceased opposite the window and Sheriff Bowen called out—

"We're going to get your friend before sunrise, Gorman."

Removing his pipe and slightly turning his head, Gorman called back:

"Bet you two hundred to fifty that you don't. Bet you two hundred to a hundred that if you meet up with him he gits you."

"Don't be too brash with your bets," snarled Bowen. "You may have some tall explaining to do after we've bagged him."

Gorman's heels came to the floor and he leaned out the window and softly demanded—

"Just what do you mean by that, Bowen?"

Bowen saw the gun and did not relish it.

"I mean that if you've had any hand in hiding a man wanted by the law you'll answer for it."

"You're crazy," sneered Gorman. "Shoshoni Hale hasn't been within a hundred miles of Idaho City since the day your partner and bosom friend murdered Sumner Pinkham."

"By ——! You talk mighty soft when you talk that stuff, Jack Gorman. You talk it so soft that nobody ever hears it," furiously warned the sheriff.

Gorman laughed.

"Uhuh? Itching to pot me, eh? Got your gun half-drawn and trying to get up nerve to risk beating me in pulling triggers. You oughter brought Patterson along.

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Now I'm going to give you a good chance. Only, be sure and git me first crack."

With that he returned to his chair and seated himself with his back to the window.

One of the sheriff's companions took him by the arm and whispered—

"He'd like to keep you talking here till daylight."

This afforded Bowen a graceful escape from a very trying situation. Muttering threats, he passed on with his companions.

Gorman slowly blew some smoke rings and murmured:

"I've thought it all out now. When I was a deputy last Winter we had to shoot a few Mexicans. Then we found that the leader had a serape and sombrero that Pink and I both took a notion to. I cut the deck for 'em and won. They're behind the calico curtain in the corner. I'll get them into the hall. I'll get some soot from the stove and some oil so you can darken your face and hands. Rub some dirt over your feet and be very drunk. There's a lot of Mexicans in town. I'll sneak down and get my horse——"

"I have a pony a mile out on the Centerville road. Get the stuff into the hall."

Gorman rose and yawned and stretched his arms and then walked to the curtained corner and drew back the strip of calico and knocked the cloak and peaked hat to the floor in so doing. From a hook he took a woolen sock, such as was commonly used for cleaning firearms, and from a shelf procured a bottle of oil. In returning to the table he kicked the hat and cloak before him. He stood facing the window, oiling and cleaning his gun and then opened the stove door.

If any one had been spying on the room from the street it would have looked as if he deposited the oily sock in the stove. In fact he rapidly besmeared it with soot and rolled it up in his hand. His next move was to the hall door, and his feet kept the cloak and hat before him. Pushing the disguise over the threshold, he dropped the sock and turned back to the window and stood for a few moments, staring up at the blazing stars.

Hale wriggled into the hall and besmeared his face until he was as dark as any Mexican. Gorman turned from the window and kicked the door shut and seated himself and began pulling off his boots. As a soft tap sounded on the door he extinguished the light.

Hale opened the outside door a crack and listened. Swinging it partly open, he slipped outside on all fours and, bending low, stole barefooted across the road. The spasmodic rumble of night riders came faintly to his ears from the down-town district. As he struck through a cross-street toward the Centerville road a horseman came up from behind him and almost ran him down. Muttering some gibberish, which he hoped would pass for drunken Spanish, and staggering slightly, he caught at the rider's stirrup as if to save himself from falling. The rider leaned low and was satisfied with the peaked hat and serape. With a curse and a kick in Hale's ribs he rode on.

Hale entered the Centerville road and had advanced within a fourth of a mile of his pony when he detected mounted figures ahead. He made his way unsteadily toward them and caught the click of guns being cocked. Without any attempt at evasion he held on, talking to himself and walking with drunken steps.

"—— greaser!" said one of the videttes as he managed to make out the shape of the pointed hat. "Where you goin'?"

"*Si, señor,*" huskily replied Hale.

"Git to —— outer here!" commanded a second picket, kicking at him but missing.

"Hush, fellers! Man on hoss-back!" warned the third.

The three lined up across the road, facing toward the town, and Hale ran noiselessly along the edge of the woods.

He had no trouble in finding the little gulch and soon was in the saddle and back in the road. He walked the pony until some distance from where he had left the pickets, then sent him into a swift gallop.

IT WAS an hour from sunrise when he slipped from the tired pony and waited for the magic turrets and spires of the hidden mountains to make their brief appearance. He had used up a day in stealing through the foot-hills north of the Payette road to a position above Old Idaho's cabin. From there it had taken much of the night to ride to the gulch. He knew Old Idaho and his granddaughter would not be stirring until the sun was up, as the gulch remained in darkness after the outside world became illuminated.

At last he decided he could enter without depriving the girl of much of her sleep, and he led the pony to the grape-vines and

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brushed them aside. He all but stepped on the limp form of Miss Harry. With a low cry of fear he scooped her up in his arms, his first thought being that some horrible tragedy had been enacted during his absence. The girl's eyes, staring into his, allayed this fear, and with an embarrassed laugh he stood her on her feet.

"Shoshoni Hale!" she exclaimed. "When did you come?"

Her loyalty in waiting for him at the vines affected him deeply.

"Just arrived. Came near stepping on you."

"I was watching for you the last two nights. I was growing afraid because you did not come."

"And last night you watched far into the night and got tired and sleepy and fell asleep," he added.

"We depend so much on you. What made you so long?"

"Had trouble in finding the specimens. Didn't dare travel here in the daytime."

"You must be hungry, and your face looks black and greasy. I'm glad you're back."

"I never knew how much like home this place seems till I left it."

"What's in the big bundle?"

"I've been buying some clothes."

"You'd look queer except as a mountain man."

"Probably what all my friends will say."

CHAPTER VIII

BACK IN THE GULCH

HALE found Black Cloud in one of his gloomy moods. During the first day the Indian would not converse, but toward the end of the second day Hale learned enough to know it was the old bitterness, the lost medicine, that was causing the misery.

"When I went away I believed my red brother's heart was waking up from its long sleep," Hale told him. "Did not the boy-girl's talk send the morning light into his heart?"

"A big cloud has been over the sun," mournfully answered the Indian. "The boy-girl had no talk for the Shoshoni. She stayed behind the grape-vines, always looking. When I went to her and asked for some medicine-talk her spirit was too far away for her to hear me. She stayed there by the vines alone, like a boy going up into the mountains to get his first medicine and name. Her spirit-eyes did not see the Shoshoni; they were on the tops of the hidden mountains. Then Black Cloud heard the evil spirits of this place laughing at him. An owl, that was my uncle, told me I should die soon because I have no medicine."

"The owl was sent by an evil spirit which is a liar," said Hale. "The owl was told to lie to you and make your blood turn to water so you would run away from even a root-and-rabbit-eating Indian. The boy-girl's spirit was far away gathering new strength. A horse and buffalo warrior must not let his heart grow weak. Now tell me about the old man. He did not act glad to see your white brother."

"He tried to take the kegs of powder from the brush house," Black Cloud insisted. "I hid them in a hole behind the brush house. When I walk to the end of this place I hear whispering. Spirits whisper in my ears that very bad things will happen here."

"They are whispering lies," said Hale. "They try to make you afraid with lies. The girl has not lost her medicine. I have not lost my medicine. My brother will find his soon."

Black Cloud's eyes gleamed with a recrudescence of hope.

"My white brother's medicine took him to the lodge of his enemies. He cried out under the moon and then fired into the lodge and killed them?"

"They had run away. But they will come back. A friend will tell me when they come back. Then I'll count my coup."

Black Cloud was disappointed but did not slip back into despair entirely. Hale's presence buoyed him up. It was plain his despondency was due largely to the girl's abstraction. Had she been less watchful for Hale's return and had entertained the Indian with her fanciful stories his mind would have no room for brooding. Left to his own devices, he permitted his recently acquired optimism to deteriorate rapidly.

Their talk was interrupted by the approach of the girl. The Indian saw her first and it was his steady staring that attracted Hale's attention to her. Hale had been puzzled and pained by her behavior for the last two days. She had stayed much with her grandfather and

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seemed to avoid Hale's company. This aloofness was so opposite to what he had hoped for, after learning how she had watched for his return, that he himself might have fallen a victim to black moods if not for the necessity of helping the warrior.

Black Cloud grunted softly as he watched the girl come bounding from boulder to boulder or clearing the obstacles with the ease of a deer. Her whole demeanor was that of a child, riotously happy, and from sheer exultation she sought barriers of rock to conquer.

"Her spirit has very strong wings. She has an eagle medicine," muttered the Indian.

Halting before the men and resting her hands on her hips she tilted her head and said—

"I must talk with you, Shoshoni Hale."

Then to the Indian, to soften his dismissal:

"It is a medicine-talk, Black Cloud. The sunrise told me how to find you a mighty medicine. It is not good for you to know more until I have spoken to your white brother."

His knowledge of English was sufficient for him to follow and grasp the gist of her speech. His powerful chest expanded and he breathed in deep gulps. He had heard an offer of redemption. Hale's face was worried and his eyes angry as he listened to her reckless speech. The girl had as good as promised to restore the warrior's lost medicine: and when the Shoshoni discovered it was only an empty talk there was no foretelling the terrible effect on his superstitious mind. Yet Hale dared not interrupt and minimize the promised benefits. Could he have guessed the girl's purpose he would have prevented her from trifling with the depths of the red man's soul. But the harm was done and Black Cloud was humbly withdrawing, moving backward that he might feast his small eyes on his deliverer.

When they were alone the girl's dimpled face grew mischievous and she peered saucily up into Hale's grave face, and next indulged in a grotesque mimicry of his expression by thrusting out her small chin and drawing down the corners of her red mouth. But the situation was too serious for Hale to be wheedled out of his displeasure.

"Miss Harry," he sadly rebuked, "it would have been much kinder if you'd shot Black Cloud through the heart. By arousing false hopes you have done him a great hurt."

"My goodness! One would think I was a man-killer," she cried, seizing his arm and swinging her feet clear off the ground. "You must be a very strong man, Shoshoni Hale."

"I thought I had told you enough about the Indian for you to understand that his lost medicine business is more than life or death to him. I thought you realized that, being red, he's far different from us in his ways of thinking."

"Granddaddy finds fault with me, and you scold," she sighed.

"No, no, child! I—I could never scold you. Good heavens! What a notion! I'm simply sorry that Black Cloud should have this new and, for him, terrible disappointment. It'll make him worse'n he has been; and he's been pretty low in the mouth as it is."

"All the more reason why his medicine should be found, or made up for," she declared.

"But it's neither found, nor made up for," he regretted.

She put a hand in her blouse and slyly drew forth a small compass and allowed him to see it, then hurriedly restored it.

"I found it among some rubbish above the spring," she whispered.

"Lucky Tom lost it when dumping the rubbish. What about it?"

"It's a part of Black Cloud's medicine," she triumphantly informed.

"What nonsense is this, Miss Harry?" he sternly asked.

"My goodness! If I was a big woman instead of squirrel size you'd never call it 'nonsense.' His medicine has something to do with the stars. He's always staring toward the sky. It was his interest in the sky that made me speak of star-dust medicine to him. I have made a little bag and I'll sew a star on it and fill it with star-dust, only the dust turns to nothing if he begins to open the bag. Poof! It'll all be gone before he can peek in. Shoshoni, this bag and compass ought to be better medicine then a lot of colored pebbles and a piece of feather."

"The Indian is as sensitive as a child. He never forgets. You've made big promises. If he ever reckons you haven't made

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good we'll never see him again. And, what's worse, his life will be a terrible sad affair. The red mind is so different from the white that you shouldn't have tried any experiments on it."

"Much obliged. This isn't any experiment," she savagely retorted. "It's a mighty good medicine. I thought you'd be pleased. I did it because he's your friend. But you're like all the rest, I reckon; you don't believe a woman can think up anything worth while."

Her show of spirit made him uneasy. As she drew away, as if to leave him, his concern for the Indian was submerged beneath self-interest.

"Don't go," he said. "I want to talk to you, I've been hungry to talk to you. We're cooped up in this gulch and yet it seems as if we was as far apart as if you was living in Mexico."

"Well, of all the talk!" she upbraided. "Here is poor me dying of lonesomeness, and there's you, stalking around like a bear with a sore head. I come near you and you run away."

He gaped at her in astonishment.

"Why, Miss Harry," he protested, "has it seemed like that to you? I've been reckoning it was just t'other way." He rubbed his chin and desperately endeavored to recall a time when he had retreated at her approach.

"Anyway, it's all forgiven if you behave from now on," she generously announced. "Tell me about your trip outside."

She seated herself cross-legged on the ground, clasped her hands about her slim ankles and waited for him to explain.

He sprawled out at full length, gazed up into her face, and answered:

"My trip outside? To be sure. I went traveling round a trifle and found some lying talk has been set going about me by Patterson and his friends."

"Um! Talk about what?"

"It ain't a talk I like to bring to you. They're telling a most awful lie about me."

"Then every one must know it's a lie. What is it?"

Her tone was sharp and insistent, and he reluctantly replied—

"They're saying as how I murdered a man—a friend of mine."

"Meaning Lucky Tom, who use to stay in these diggings?"

He nodded. She clinched her hands and smote them together, and denounced:

"The cowards! They ought to be killed off-hand, like so many snakes!"

"Things are bound to clear up soon," he added. "I've taken steps to have the truth brought out as to how Lucky Tom died."

"Just what have you planned?" she breathlessly asked.

"It's bad medicine to tell ahead," he evaded. "Let's talk about something cheerful."

She wanted to question him for details but there was that in his sober face that discouraged the desire for the time. She gazed at the toes of her moccasins for half a minute, and the sunshine seemed to leave her face, and her voice was wistful as she finally asked—

"Would you think me wiser and nicer if I was bigger?"

"Dog-gone!" he muttered. "What a notion!"

"Or if I didn't dress like a boy, but like the girls I saw in Idaho City? I've got some pretty dresses; made 'em myself mostly. But these are handier to move round in out here." And she patted the fringed trousers.

"What fool questions!" he cried.

"But would you?" she persisted, now refusing to meet his gaze.

"No!" He fairly roared.

She ventured on a side-glance at him and timidly pleaded—

"You're not saying that just to make me feel better, Shoshoni? '

"Why, Miss Harry, you leave me plumb flabbergasted! Have you bigger? Good Lord! If you was bigger could you be dainty as cherry blossoms, as light as thistle silk swimming in the wind, as—as—Oh, what's the use! You know what I feel and am trying to say. And as for clothes, I ain't seen you in your t'other togs, but you'd have to be mighty smart to improve on the sensible togs you're wearing."

"Then why did you seem to keep away from me after you got back?"

"Keep away from you?" he growled. "Didn't I hang around till I felt as meeching as a pup caught stealing milk? Haven't I stuck so close to the cliff that your granddaddy showed his teeth at me? And haven't you gone by with your head turned t'other way like I was p'izen?"

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The counter accusation filled her with happiness.

"Now you're nice and I forgive you," she whispered. "I ain't awfully well civilized, I reckon, and I don't know just how the Idaho City girls would act in my place. But I've always had the notion that a girl should never look to be chasing a man."

"You'd never have to chase any man," he whispered, his hand timidly touching her arm.

"Tell me some more," she murmured, allowing her fingers to close about his wrist.

His eyes blinked and he forced himself to shift his gaze to the figure of the Indian up the gulch. For a count of ten he looked on his red friend, while the girl waited. Suddenly withdrawing his hand he leaped to his feet and caught her by the wrists and helped her to stand erect. Then, stepping back, he mumbled:

"Miss Harry, I'm mighty proud that you don't mind my company—that you're willing to talk with me. I've got a little bit of trouble to clear up and when that's finished I reckon I'm going to be a regular talker."

She stared at him in astonishment and anger, an anger rising from a sense of shame. She breathed rapidly as the new emotions overwhelmed her, and her voice was unsteady as she advised—

"When you get to be a famous talker you can talk to Pinaquana, or the Indian."

With that she ran toward the spring where her granddaddy was using the pick on the gulch wall.

"Well, I'll be —— if I know what's the matter with her," muttered Hale. "Prospecting for love is harder'n chasing diamonds. Yet it can't be she's mad at me, as I've given her no cause to be. Besides, she's that tender and wonderful. And a woman can't change in flash like that." He ruminated the last thoughtfully and suddenly decided—"But that's just what she done!"

Bewildered by the girl's behavior and unable to comprehend the cause, he slowly walked after her. As he drew near the spring she moved on up the gulch. He would have followed, thereby, perhaps, redeeming himself in her estimation, if it had not been for Old Idaho's appearance of guilt. He had done something, or was about to do something, which he did not want Hale to observe. His sly eyes, his hurried move to throw a blanket over some object, put Hale on his guard.

SINCE his return from destroying the spelter mill Hale had talked scarcely any with the old man. Nor had Idaho's behavior invited conversation. After hearing Hale's terse report about the destruction of the mill he had turned his back. It was as if he regretted his benefactor's return and looked upon him as an interloper. Hale might have weighed this deportment more shrewdly had he not been concerned over the girl's seeming desire to avoid him. Now he took time to study the old man.

Idaho tried to pretend he did not mind being watched and became busy with the spring-pole. But, although there was plenty of rich rock about the stream running from the spring, Hale knew the weighted pole had not been used since his return. Idaho had, however, industriously used the pick on the cliff and broken a hole a half-foot deep in the wall. This penetration was possible because of the weathered condition of the rock. Ignoring Hale's presence, he picked up a drill and commenced sinking a hole some five feet from the ground.

"What's the idea of that, Idaho?" asked Hale.

"Want to test for color," mumbled the old man.

"You can't git any rock out the face of the cliff after you git through the rotten rock."

"Just curious to see if there's a hidden vein in there," was the gruff reply.

"If it doesn't show on the face you're wasting time and strength. If one does show you can make better money picking up the loose stuff. You can't chip out anything that'll amount to much. If you don't git after this quartz around the spring I'll be gitting it myself."

This good-natured threat brought the old man about, his whole attitude breathing malevolence.

"Shoshoni Hale," he informed him, "this is my gulch. You're welcome to decent pay for fetching Harry'n me here. You're welcome to good pay for going back and wiping out that little mill of mine. But we ain't partners: just remember that. You name what you think's a fair price.

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If it's within reason I'll pay up, and you can go your way."

Hale's love for the humorous made it difficult for him to hide his smile. Speaking sternly, he said:

"Nonsense, Idaho. You may have wandered in here when you were chasing lost cattle, but you didn't know what you had found until you got to Oregon. And then you couldn't find this place again. But we won't argue over the gold. I've got more important things to think about. All you git together will go to Miss Harry. I'd rather see her have it than any one. As my life has panned out I don't need much more gold than Black Cloud does. As for leaving here you forgit I might run into lots of trouble. And if I go the Indian goes with me. Who would bring in game for you and keep a watch on the outside?"

Old Idaho was not prepared to answer. With the exception of a bag of flour they had exhausted all the provisions originally brought into the gulch, and the greater part of their living had depended upon the Indian's hunting expeditions. Old Idaho would have been as vexed to have the Indian go as he was disgruntled at having Hale remain. He smoothed his beard as if the stroking of his hand likewise smoothed out the kinks in his mind and, in an effort to be amiable, he declared:

"We're happy in here. No quarreling. No reason why we can't keep it up. If I seem fretful at times it's just my way. As to the gold I'm willing to be a little more'n fair. And, as you say, you don't need much."

"We'll let it go at that," agreed Hale.

Then he removed the blanket that concealed a keg of powder. Without a word he went to the hole back of the brush-shelter and discovered the other two kegs were missing. Returning to Old Idaho, he demanded:

"Where's the two kegs? Quick! I want 'em."

"It's my powder to use as I see fit and——"

"You mad man! You're reckoning on blasting that cliff. Haven't you sense enough to know this gulch will be our grave if you shoot a single blast in that wall? You're drilling that hole to fill with powder! If you don't care about yourself, don't you care about the girl?"

"It's all a derned lie about any danger from a blast," hoarsely defended the old man. "The teeny blast I'd set off wouldn't amount to shucks. There's a solid river of gold inside that cliff and I want to have it out. I'm too old to spend time picking up crums when I can have a whole loaf at a whack."

"And three weeks ago you were making bogus dust because you couldn't find the crums," sternly replied Hale. "Where's the powder?" He picked up the keg and carried it back to the shelter.

Idaho rebelled and fumed for a while, then sulkily led the way to where it was cached in the gravel at the foot of the cliff. Hale opened the kegs and, ignoring Idaho's frantic cries, spilled the powder into the rivulet flowing from the spring.

"—— you for that, Hale!" panted the old man. "Don't you fret but what I'll git the loose stuff. And some day, when you ain't snooping 'round, I'll tap the big vein. It's in there, and you know it. You plan to keep me busy picking up small stuff, a-thinking you'll open up this cliff. But you won't. The big vein's in there and so pure you can cut it with a knife; but it won't be Shoshoni Hale's knife that cuts it."

"Your cursing won't do so much mischief as a blast will do," replied Hale. "Can't you understand that if you touch off a charge in that cliff you'll bury this gulch and every one in it till the last trump sounds? As to cutting out gold, you're thinking of ruby silver. You'll find none of that in these diggings. If there's any quartz in that wall it doesn't show on the face. But if there's oceans of it in there you'd have to pick it out mighty careful or find yourself under a few million ton of rock. And if you could pick it out you'd have to have a stamp-mill. There's more of it loose underfoot than you can ever break up with a sledge-hammer."

Old Idaho made no more talk but set to work using the spring-pole. Sorry that the old man's obsession should take such a disagreeable trend, Hale started to overtake the girl, but she hurried on the faster until he was convinced he was as unwelcome in her eyes as he was in her grandfather's. He ceased his pursuit and went to the Indian and briefly explained his belief that a talking-paper might be waiting for him or his messenger under the door-step of Idaho's cabin.

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"When the sky-serpent runs along the top of the rocks your red brother will go for it," said Black Cloud, meaning when the last rays of the setting sun set the rim of the cliffs to blazing.

Miss Harry returned from up the gulch soon after the Indian had taken his departure. If she missed him she asked no questions but busied herself in preparing the evening meal. Her grandfather sat apart, lost in moody meditations, and his glance was far from kindly when he looked at Hale. The meal was a failure from a social point of view. Depressed in spirits, Hale made no efforts at conversation. Instead of the usual evening chat he retired early to his brush shelter and went to sleep. When he awoke, the Indian was by his side and the glow in the east was sifting over the top of the cliffs.

"You found the talking-paper?" asked Hale.

"There was no talking-paper. My brother's medicine is weak," answered the Indian. "When Black Cloud's medicine gets strong it will bring the paper."

The morning passed with the girl working industriously with her grandfather. Hale would have enjoyed helping them but feared his motive would be misconstrued. He wandered alone to the upper end of the gulch, Pinaquana trotting after him. When the sun was sending perpendicular heat rays down into the gulch he turned back to get something to eat. Before he reached the brush shelter an arrow finished its graceful flight and stuck in the gravel at his feet.

Hale jerked up his head and beheld Old Idaho running from the overhanging cliff, long rifle in hand. Beyond him, coming from the mouth of the corridor, was the Indian. For Hale's benefit he was running from side to side, making the signal for "discovery." Leaping onto the mare's back, Hale rode swiftly down to the fire-hole. To Old Idaho he said:

"Enemies are near! Keep the girl in under the cliff. The Cloud and I will stand them off."

Leaping from the mare, he ran to where the Indian was standing.

"White men near the grape-vines," was Black Cloud's guttural report.

Hale pulled his guns and felt the old dread of his unknown trackers tugging at his heart and making it weak. How many times had he given ground when he had had reason to believe his implacable, relentless enemies were about to discover him! But this was the first time he had found himself cornered. Then came the reassuring thought that for once they must meet him face to face.

"How many?" he snapped over his shoulder to the Indian, who was close to his heels, his bow and arrow ready for instant use.

The Indian held up two fingers. Hale slowed down, perplexed.

"Then it can't be Danites or a posse," he muttered.

"Very sly like the fox. Bend down like this." And the Indian crouched low and moved from side to side.

"Must be scouts sent out by a posse. They're hunting for signs of my trail. You keep back, Black Cloud. If they're after me I'll sneak out and lead them a chase to the river."

"My brother's friend will go with him and watch the chase," replied the Indian; and Hale knew it would be useless to argue the matter.

They entered the long passageway and stole to the thick screen, expecting to encounter an intruder at every step. No one had passed through the vines, however, and when they reached the curtain and looked out they could see no one. The Indian grunted softly and murmured something about evil spirits. Then he whispered—

"There were two of them. Just beyond the broken rock."

Hale drew a revolver and settled himself to wait. At last a hat appeared and then a head. The man was near enough to be recognized, and Hale was relieved to find he did not answer the description of either Mushet or Burnham. As he backed out around the rocks he bent low and examined the ground. The head of another man showed; and as he came into view and imitated the other's peculiar behavior, the Shoshoni whispered—

"Old-chief-who-keeps-the-presents."

This characterization could apply only to Governor Lyon, who had failed to turn over to the Idaho Indians some fifty thousand dollars of the Federal appropriation. Entirely relaxed, Hale watched the two for several minutes, then chuckled softly, and told himself:

"Derned if the two fools ain't hunting

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for diamonds! T'other chap must be Fogus, Lyon's partner."

He whispered as much to Black Cloud. The men were carrying large buckskin bags into which they dropped the glittering bits of rock. And as they worked they kept a close watch on the broken country stretching north to the Payette. The Indian saw nothing amusing in the intrusion, and warned—

"Hunt for diamonds, find gold, maybe."

He stuck two arrows in the ground and began testing his bow.

"No! That would be murder. They'll be going back soon. Even if they're followed and discovered we won't be found."

The barrel of a long rifle slipped under Hale's arm and through the vines. Hale shoved one hand under the hammer and with the other caught the brown barrel and forced the weapon back. Black Cloud seized Old Idaho and dragged him into the passageway, with one hand over his mouth to prevent any outcry. Hale followed with the old man's gun. When they had regained the gulch Hale sternly reprimanded him—

"You came near doing murder."

"No murder to kill skunks that's following me," passionately cried Idaho.

"They're not following either you or me. They are Governor Lyon and a miner called Fogus. They're hunting for diamonds."

"Lyon after di'mon's!" exclaimed the old man. "The man all Idaho City's talking about hunts di'mon's here! And the fools said he'd go to Owyhee!"

"And they're wasting their time," amended Hale.

"A governor of this territory a wasting his time on a fool's business?" jeered Idaho. "You know better!"

"Then believe the landslide out there is filled with diamonds," Hale wearily retorted.

"You don't know to the contrary. When I was in Idaho City wasn't the town plumb crazy over Lyon and di'mon's? Didn't I hear men tell about Idaho di'mon's fetching a thousand dollars'n more for one stone? Little, teeny stones at that!"

His eyes were wolfish as he told this.

"Plenty of gold, but no diamonds," said Hale firmly. "We must keep quiet till those two finish prospecting and go back."

"What if they're followed?" asked the girl at his elbow.

"Then all the more reason for laying low, Miss Harry."

"All the more reason to believe there's di'mon's out there!" panted Old Idaho, his cupidity leaping from gold to precious stones. "A parcel of men wouldn't be chasing round out here less there was some show of finding what they're after."

"I want to go and look at them," said the girl.

"You'd best stay here," said Hale.

"Oh, I'm not afraid. They're not after me," she said with a smile.

She darted for the passageway. Hale stared after her, his gray-green eyes hard and cold. For a moment he was tempted to go outside and demonstrate to her that he could answer for himself. Common sense rescued him from this touch of madness. Almost by the time he had regained his self-control the girl was back, her hands outstretched. He looked at her in silence and made no offer to accept her hands. She halted before him and pleaded:

"Say that you don't mind. I was ugly to say that. And I haven't been to the grape-vines. I will not look out. It's best I stay here as you said."

"Forgit all about it," said Hale. "Words don't hurt any."

But words do hurt, hurt worse than blows; and even while he spoke he writhed under her implication that he was remaining concealed because he feared the intruders. Let her be ever so remorseful, he could not oust the thought that she had been doubting his courage. She had talked about shadows. She was now imagining him to be hiding from his old fears. And it was a cruel truth that in a moment of weakness he had been afraid.

Old Idaho bruskly announced:

"You may boss the girl but you can't boss me. If any one's picking up di'mon's on my property I reckon to know it. I'm going to have a look at them."

"Go ahead," surrendered Hale. "Git us all captured. Fill the gulch up with Ferd Patterson's friends."

This sobered the old man more than any opposition could have done. More civilly he said:

"I'll leave my rifle. I'll be as still as a mouse in a meal-bag."

Hale walked away to pet Pinaquana;

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the girl remained where he had left her. The Indian followed the old man to the passageway, then turned back to join his friend. The girl intercepted him and produced a small buckskin bag sealed at the top with many stitches and having a five-pointed star outlined on one side. As the Indian beheld it his eyes dilated and his high cheek-bones glistened with perspiration. He stared as one in a trance while the girl produced a length of rawhide and ran it through the stout loop at the top of the bag. Holding it up, she softly said:

"There is a good spirit in this place. He is much stronger than all the evil spirits. He lives in a house of glass and brass and always points his medicine-arrow toward the north. He told me to make this bag and after leaving it open for one night to sew it up without looking inside. I believe it is filled with star-dust. It is stronger than the medicine that Black Cloud lost, but it will become nothing if it is opened."

The Indian sounded a guttural shout for Hale to come and literally interpret the girl's words. He had caught the meaning of all she had said, but her speech being medicine must be translated in detail. Hale joined them, displeased that the girl had assumed the risk of making a medicine for the Shoshoni, yet realizing the matter had proceeded too far for him to do aught then bid. So he slowly and solemnly interpreted her fanciful speech.

When he finished the Indian accepted the bag and slipped the thong around his neck. As he felt the medicine resting on his iron chest a new light shone in his small eyes. He did not attempt to speak but stood with his two hands stretched toward the northern sky-line.

While he was thus emphasizing his ecstasy the girl produced the small compass and held it for him to take. Slowly his hands sank to seize the instrument. The intense focus of his gaze was that of one staring at a fetish. The needle swam and bobbed up and down a bit, then settled down to its eternal business of pointing toward the north. With a tremendous intake of the breath the Indian tucked it inside his hunting-shirt and without a word snatched up a blanket. The sun was hot, yet he muffled his tall form head to foot and walked up the gulch.

"You've either made him, or killed him," whispered Hale. "I was fearing he had seen a compass among the road-builders."

"What if he has? It was not his compass. It will merely convince him the white people know a strong medicine and carry it. Shoshoni Hale, do you really reckon there's any danger of those men finding the entrance to this place?"

"I don't know. If they're followed by a crowd of spying diamond-hunters some one's likely to find us."

"Isn't there some other place we could hide in if we need to?"

"Yes. On the east slope of Notched Butte near Little Wood River is the opening to a lava cave. The cave's very large and dry. It's fully four hundred feet long by some thirty feet wide. But to git there without being seen would be harder than gitting down here. It's quite a distance, but it could be made by night travel. It's a safe place. I came on it by accident. A small piece of the roof had fallen in. I don't believe either red or white man ever entered it. It's a ten-foot drop if you don't use a rope. Another place is the northeast side of Big Butte, where there's a good spring, the only water to be found in many miles around during the Summer. No one goes there as no one knows where the spring is. Black Cloud showed it to me."

"The last is the best," she said. "The cave sounds cold and dark."

"But I don't reckon we're going to be found out in this gulch, Miss Harry. There's no sign those fellows have been followed. They won't find any diamonds and won't come back."

"We're good friends, Shoshoni?"

"The best of friends, if you'll let me say it, Miss Harry."

"I had a funny feeling when I gave that medicine-bag to Black Cloud. Seemed if something was going to happen."

"Something always happens."

"This seemed to be bad luck."

"Then I'm sorry for Black Cloud."

"Not bad luck for him. In my mind I can see him riding at the head of mounted Indians and looking very brave."

"Surely not for yourself?" he fiercely asked; for environment and loneliness had given a streak of superstition to his make-up.

"No; not for myself." Then hurriedly: "Nor for you. Seemed to be granddaddy. But that's foolishness, of course."

"Just nervousness," he declared.

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Hale looked toward his friend still muffled in the thick blanket. There was nothing in the solitary figure to suggest leadership. Riding at the head of mounted redskins, eh? It was a queer conceit, and yet the girl saw things in the heavens that none else saw. She heard voices among the insects, in the whistle of the hot wind and in the overflowing spring, that even Black Cloud never heard. It was not for him to say what she saw or failed to see.

The girl, as impulsive as she was honest, fell to wondering if she could lead the big fellow back to that threshold of sentiment which he had almost crossed. Before she could make the trial Old Idaho returned and disconsolately cried out:

"They're gone away. I didn't see hide or hair of 'em. Just dug out for good."

"Come! That's good," said Hale, brightening.

"Not much good if it means they know there ain't any di'mon's out there," peevishly replied the old man. "And it ain't much good if it means they've scooped 'em all up."

"There are no diamonds in this locality, Idaho," declared Hale.

Old Idaho looked at him cunningly. Of course Shoshoni Hale would say that. Knowing that the gold in Lucky Gulch was another's by discovery, he would wish to secure the diamonds for himself. If the two stealthy prospectors had failed to find any precious stones would they be giving up their search so early? The old man answered himself with a strong negative. But once they found their quest was successful they would hasten back to avoid being found on their "diamond diggings." He knew what they were up to: they were gone to secure a supply of food, and soon they would be returning to gather the treasure.

The old man walked through the twilight to the spring. His dull eyes did not brighten as he looked at the hole in the cliff. The spring-pole and sledge aroused no enthusiasm. Oro Fino gold was assaying sixteen dollars to the ounce. Boise seldom assayed less than fifteen, at which price the Idaho City merchants had agreed to accept it, although paying only ten dollars an ounce for Owyhee, and twelve for Florence. Lucky Gulch would run eighteen to the ounce, Hale had once said.

But even at that price it was little better than gravel when one considered the huge values packed in a diamond. Had not Lyon sold a "teeny" one for five hundred dollars? Then again one did not have to break the back and bark the fingers in pounding up rock in order to secure diamonds. Gathering diamonds was no more arduous than picking salmon-berries. These were some of the old man's dream-thoughts as he walked up the gulch and with lackluster eyes gazed on the rich diggings.

He passed, without seeing him, another dreamer; but Black Cloud's visions encompassed that which is more precious than gold or gems—leadership. His confidence in the new medicine supplied by the boy-girl was superb; and he was infinitely exalted above Old Idaho's plane of sordid greed. He saw himself at the head of many braves, painted and armed for war, with comely women of his race crossing his path, eager to keep his teepee swept clean and to cook his food. Instead of life ended he visioned a future wherein walked many a descendant, walking bravely and filling a high place, and yet ever looking back to Black Cloud as a pattern to be followed.

And the young man hurrying away from the maid had his dream, and it was not of wealth, nor power. Twice he had been tempted that day by her sweet willingness to be wooed. Because she was young and fair to look upon and because she was the most wonderful creation he could ever contemplate the conviction was born in his soul that he must keep out of her path until there were no shadows at his heels.

It was early morning when Hale was aroused from his sleep by the girl's shrill voice calling his name. There was trouble in her cry, and grabbing his hand-guns he crawled from the brush shelter. From up the gulch came the war-cry of the Shoshoni people, for Black Cloud, sleeping alone to be nearer his medicine, also had heard the clear voice. Hale saw her a few rods from his brush shelter and she was alone, and there was nothing to disturb the serenity of the place. Pinaquana, an unfailing barometer when danger was near, was placidly grazing.

"What is it, Miss Harry?" Hale called out.

"He's gone, Shoshoni! He's gone with his rifle!" she cried. "Granddaddy's gone! He must have left the gulch in the night."

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"Don't fret. He's just outside somewhere. I'll soon fetch him back," he promised. "Just set out some grub while I saddle the mare."

CHAPTER IX

THE TALKING-PAPER

HALE ate hurriedly and then led Pinaquana through the passageway to where the girl was impatiently waiting behind the vines. The girl was not deeply worried, now that Hale had assured her that her grandfather must be near the gulch. He had not taken a horse and it was plain to both that his imprudent excursion had been impelled by his desire to indulge in secret prospecting for diamonds.

"So don't you bother your head about him any more," Hale told her as he made ready to pass through the curtain. "He's within a quarter of a mile of here; probably just around the shoulder of the slide. It got to gnawing at his mind when he saw those two men picking over the loose rocks yesterday. He doesn't know anything about diamonds, but he believes he can slip out and pick up a pint or two before breakfast."

"I'll be waiting for you here like I did the other time; only now I won't go to sleep," she said.

"You'd best go back and keep the Indian from gitting blue," he advised. "He ain't awfully well acquainted with his new medicine yet. It may take some time to locate your granddaddy, as he could hide behind any pile of rocks, and I won't find him till I happen upon him. If he sees me coming he'll lie snug, not caring to come back till he's made a discovery."

She shook hands with him and he passed through the vines and commenced his search. Pinaquana pressed closely at his heels, trying to keep her muzzle on his shoulder, and more than once he rebuked her and solemnly promised he was not trying to desert her. Owing to the rocky nature of the ground, it was impossible to pick up a trail unless Idaho had wandered clear of the slide.

For half an hour Hale searched the rocks, frequently mounting a boulder to enlarge his range of vision. Sometimes a black shadow at the base of a mound would fool him for a moment. Disgusted at his failure, he left the rocky area and mounted the mare. He rode around the fan-shaped slide, keeping at a distance and searching in vain for traces of the runaway. The sunbaked earth precluded any sign being left by a traveler afoot. The shod hoofs of the mare scarcely left a mark.

The wide half-circle was finally completed. It had taken considerable time and had invited discovery by any strangers happening to be in that vicinity. Hale had taken the mare along to guard against a possible surprize. If strangers saw him he planned to ride away and divert attention from the gulch. But so far as he could determine he had the desolate country entirely to himself; and after two hours of searching he galloped back to the entrance. Pinaquana in a low whinny told him the girl was just beyond the vines.

Eagerly dismounting, Hale parted the vines and confronted her. Her small face was deeply troubled.

"I saw you coming back alone," she said.

"He must have worked 'way round the mountains and scooted up some box-cañon on the north side," he cheerfully suggested. "He'll be back soon."

"I'm afraid he has wandered farther'n that. I must go after him," she said.

"Great snakes, Miss Harry! That would be the biggest piece of foolishness you could do. I can find him all right, but there's one inside who can beat all creation at that kind of work. I'll send Black Cloud out. He'll be keen to exercise his new medicine. If white men meet him they won't suspect anything about this gulch. He can go anywhere without being troubled, even to Boise City or to Idaho City. Nothing disagreeable has happened to your granddaddy. He's where he wants to be. But the Indian can find him before you could even git started. We'll git inside and put him to work."

She went back with him but did not react to his optimism as he had hoped. In his heart he was greatly worried over the old man's disappearance. He feared that Idaho had left early in the night and had become confused and had walked off a ledge or fallen into a hole. The box-cañon on the north side of the mountains was his invention to quiet the girl's anxiety.

They found the Indian seated by the fire-hole. During their absence he had

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eaten all the food left by Hale and had painted his face and chest. He was polishing his rifle when they came up. Hale knew the man was demanding action, whether it be war or travel. New blood filled his veins and his bearing was haughty, almost imperious, as his two friends joined him.

"My red brother's medicine is very strong," saluted Hale. Although the Indian knew Old Idaho was missing and that Hale had been abroad he would make no inquiry. He proudly informed:

"The new medicine floats the Black Cloud over very high places. It makes his eyes see as far as the eagle's."

"It is good. The medicine shall work for the boy-girl. The old one has wandered away like a foolish horse. Your white brother has been outside and used his weak eyes and found no signs. Let Black Cloud's medicine-eyes find the trail. I have not told the boy-girl what I think; the old one has either fallen into a hole, or has started for the cabin on the river road. If alive he must be brought back here before white men find him."

"If white men have found him?" grunted Black Cloud.

"Then they will take him to Idaho City. Your medicine will tell you to be sly like a fox and not try to take him from there. You must have no trouble with the whites. Bring him back if you find him alone. If you see him with white men do not go near him, but find my friend in Idaho City. I will send a talking-paper to him. He will send word back to me."

"Make the talking-paper. The Black Cloud goes for his pony."

As he hastened to find his pony the girl anxiously asked—

"What did you say, Shoshoni?"

"Told him to keep going till he finds your granddaddy. Better trail along after him till he gits his pony. He knows you are big medicine."

Not at all satisfied that she had received the full truth from Hale, for he had talked at some length to the Indian and had mentioned Idaho City, she readily followed Black Cloud for the purpose of questioning him. Hale would have smiled sardonically had he guessed her purpose, for to interrogate the Indian under the circumstances would be no more resultful than to talk to the towering cliffs.

He was pleased to have her leave him, however, as it afforded him a chance to write a few lines to Jack Gorman. Finishing his message, he went to the mouth of the gulch and waited for the girl and the Indian. When they came the Indian was mounted and carrying himself very erect one moment and leaning from the saddle and humbly listening to the girl in the next. Almost in tears the girl complained:

"He doesn't seem to understand any English, Shoshoni. Yesterday I thought he understood me. You talk to him."

Hale rapidly informed Black Cloud he would give him the white man's name when they were alone. The Indian replied:

"The boy-girl asks many things. Tell her my medicine says I shall find what I hunt."

Hale repeated this to the girl and added:

"He wants you to remain here. Some foolishness about making his medicine weak if a woman goes any farther. I'll go as far as the vines and be right back."

With this amiable falsehood he and the Indian took to the passageway. Arriving at the vines he handed over the note and repeated Gorman's name until Black Cloud could pronounce it intelligibly. Without further speech they parted.

HALE found the girl seated on a rock, her chin in her hands. She was much downcast and greatly to be pitied. Hale stared at the forlorn little figure in silence and wildly wondered what he could say. She spoke first and with the artlessness of a child said:

"I might have known it couldn't last. This living here where everything is so peaceful and quiet."

"It's only a makeshift," he agreed, seating himself. "Even if there wasn't anything in our medicine to stop it from lasting you'd git tired of it. The gulch always remains the same, but you're different every day. What suits today won't interest you tomorrow. Trouble here is there isn't anything to do."

She glanced at him quickly and in an odd little voice rebuked:

"So you're tired of it as well as granddaddy. A woman's pleased with peace and quiet. A man wants fights and trouble. Granddaddy's old. He's always dreamed of being rich. Here's enough gold to satisfy even a young man with

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his whole life before him. Now granddaddy hasn't any more use for gold. He must have diamonds. He looks ahead and forgets he's old and wants more, more, more! That's the way with men."

"Bless you, Miss Harry! A man ain't shucks compared with a woman," he readily agreed.

She scornfully retorted:

"If I believed that I'd never say it, if I was a man. Why shouldn't a man be as worth while as a woman? That talk is silly."

He rubbed his chin and meekly assented—

"Reckon it is."

"Don't agree with everything I say like a sheep."

"It would take a heap of spunk to disagree to anything you say, Miss Harry. But come! Let's not be down on our luck. The Indian will be kiting back here in no time with your granddaddy slung across his saddle! And everything will be happy again."

"It can't be the same again," she quietly replied. "Now he's quit the gulch others will be quitting. That medicine I gave the Indian told me something would happen. Bad luck. Sounds foolish. Of course I don't believe in Indian medicine. I must have been stupid when we first came here, or I'd have known we couldn't stay."

Hale leaped to his feet and cried:

"Come on! Let's give our medicine a chance. Your granddaddy's coming back with a long face. He can't find any diamonds. He'll fret about the time lost from working the placer. He'll be wishing he had more gold. Let's pan out some for him."

"But it's your gold," she reminded him. "In talking with him you never say 'our' gold, even let alone 'my' gold. But it *is* your gold. We'll not forget that no matter how granddaddy carries on."

"Oh, there's enough for all of us. The thing is to git a few bags filled with dust while waiting for the Indian to fetch him back."

He realized the girl needed some mental distraction. Placer mining would serve admirably. In her zeal to rival his efforts the color soon heightened in her brown cheeks, and she scrambled over the rocks with the agility of a boy. She brought the most promising rock to the natural mortar and Hale soon reduced it with the weighted spring-pole so the gold could be washed out. Before she could tire of this phase of the work he suggested they pan from the gravel. The sun crossed the midday line before she knew it. Even then he did not permit her to become melancholy but talked about his appetite and helped her set out the food which had been cooked the evening before. While they ate he rapidly outlined plans for excavating the gravel around the spring and insisted they should find some rare nuggets deep in the wash.

Never before had Shoshoni Hale suspected his gift of speech. His words tumbled over each other and amazed the girl even in her perturbed state of mind. But endeavor as he would he could not keep her thoughts from swinging back to the thing that worried her. Two tears trembled on the long lashes. She rose hurriedly that he might not observe her weakness and went in under the hanging cliff. He pretended not to notice and filled and lighted his pipe. Very soon she was back, exhibiting a forced gaiety and declaring her readiness to wash the few dishes and then take up their search for nuggets.

They worked hard throughout the afternoon, with neither speaking of the thought uppermost in their minds—the prolonged absence of the Indian. Had Old Idaho taken a horse it would have been easier to understand Black Cloud's failure to find him; but why should one of the best trailers in the Upper Country be so long in overhauling a man on foot, and an old man at that? And yet, reasoned Hale to himself, if anything serious had happened to the old man the Indian would be back with word to that effect.

The new gravel contributed generously to their stock of dust but produced nothing phenomenal. At dusk Hale threw down his pan and announced—

"We'll knock off and have some hot victuals to eat."

"You won't wait till they come?" she softly asked.

"I can, but I'm starving. We'll git things ready."

The food was cooked and eaten and they took their places beside the fire-hole and threw on fuel until the flames leaped high and drove back the evening chill.

"Well, they haven't come yet," remarked the girl wearily.

"Hiding up snug and tighter till it gits darker," encouraged Hale.

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The girl became silent and stared at the fire. Hale smoked his pipe out and refilled it and covertly watched her sad face. Late in the evening she straightened back and repeated—

"Well, they haven't come yet."

"They've had too far to travel. They'll be here with the sun."

"I hope so," she murmured, rising. "Good night. I think I'll try to sleep."

"Good night, and do sleep," he gently urged, his heart aching at her silent misery.

He feared the shelter of the leaning cliff would bring weeping instead of slumber; and he was enraged at his helplessness. Taking his blankets, he traversed the corridor and made his bed behind the vines. The mare came after him, but he sent her back.

THE dawn failed to bring either Old Idaho or the Indian. The girl said nothing, but the tightly compressed red lips told of repressed emotion. Hale was at loss how to comfort her and talked but little. He took the pan and mechanically washed out some gold beside the overflowing spring. She came and watched him but made no offer to supplement his labors. Both were waiting.

At midday he went back to the flat rock and found some cold meat and bread awaiting him, but the girl was not in sight. Seized with a sudden fear, he whistled for the mare to follow him and plunged into the narrow passageway. The relief of finding her crouched behind the vines left him weak. She had been weeping and averted her head. He awkwardly said—

"They'll be here soon."

She made no reply and masked her face by pressing it into the vines. He shifted his position and turned to go back, then hesitated. He felt he was not wanted and yet feared it would smack of indifference if he left her. He was sadly puzzled to know just what a man should do to comfort a disconsolate female.

Finally he started back, driving the disappointed mare before him, and picked his way softly as if fearing to disturb her. He had covered half the corridor when a low cry stayed his steps.

The cry was repeated, this time louder; and he ran to her side and stared through the vines. A bobbing black dot was weaving in and out over the broken ground. In a husky whisper she said—

"A man on a horse!"

Hale squinted up his eyes. It was a horseman, but he did not dare offer any hope. They waited and watched the dot expand and take on shape.

"It's Black Cloud," announced Hale, trying to make his voice sound ordinary. "I can't tell if he has your granddaddy riding before him."

"He comes alone," she muttered.

The rider suddenly became visible, his pony scrambling over the rough ground with the sure-footedness of a mountain sheep. The girl's vision had not deceived her: Black Cloud rode alone and he was riding furiously. With frequent glances behind him he drew nearer the entrance and slipped from his panting mount. Leading the pony, he hurried to the vines and entered.

"You didn't find him. Your medicine wasn't strong enough," was the girl's greeting.

"Idaho City. Good," he told her. Then in the Shoshoni tongue he explained to Hale: "The old one is locked up in the strong lodge of the white men. One of the men, who was picking over rocks outside here, found him walking toward the river. Old-chief-who-keeps-the-presents had just gone on ahead to Idaho City. The man who found the old one knew he was wanted by the white men, and he put him on a horse and took him to Idaho City. Black Cloud's medicine took him to Idaho City as swift as the west wind. White men made very much talk about the old one in the strong lodge. Some talked very angry. Other white men talked only of shining stones and forgot all about the old one. I found the man called Gorman, my brother's friend, and gave him the talking paper. He gave me a paper to bring here."

"Give it to me when we are alone," broke in Hale. "She must not know yet that he is the white men's prisoner." To the girl he said: "Just what he told you. Your granddaddy went back to the Payette, got a horse somewhere and rode to Idaho City. All he thinks about is diamonds. Leave me to talk with the Indian alone as I will have to question him to git facts and it's a hard job even when I have him alone."

She shook her head as if fathoming his

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deceit and dejectedly went down the passageway. When she had turned the corner of the corridor Black Cloud produced a folded sheet of paper, and opening it Hale read:

Big news. Curks and three men are here. Came in from Boise just ahead of your Injun. Old Idaho fetched in by Fogus, who was out with Lyon, prospecting for diamonds on the sly. Town wild over diamonds. Curks and *the three* planning with Bowen to get into the game.

O. I. is locked up but is treated well. Something behind it all we on the street don't quite understand. Believe Patterson is trying to find out where the girl is and will offer O. I. his liberty if he'll tell. I know the sheriff has told him he can be lynched for passing bogus dust. He probably added that Patterson is the only one who can save him, P. being the main witness against him. One of the boys tells me O. I. isn't a bit afraid.

Reckon they'll try to make out a sure case against him by making him tell where he has hidden his no-good dust. They reckon he has lots of it stored up somewhere. Reckon he's guilty all right. If they make out a sure case against him he'll have to tell what they want to know, or take his chances with a mob. Riply and the others can't do anything if they prove it on him. For they've cursed the sheriff for not doing his duty and they curse him if he does. The men who are forming a committee won't lynch him but will turn him over to the law. If he's lynched it'll be by a Gold Dust Saloon mob, making believe to be vigilants.

I'm told O. I. is raving about diamonds. Some think he's found them and ought to be kept alive. Fogus says he's crazy; talked crazy on the ride in. But Fogus doesn't want any one to believe in diamonds if he and Lyon have found any.

I'm spreading word he's crazy and has been crazy for a long time. If you can find out from the girl where he has his no-good dust cached send the Injun to remove it. Patterson's crowd will find it sure if it's left where he hid it. Curks and the three are working in this with P. Third man is Weber Joe. Be sure and let me know ahead when you're coming so I can sit in. J. G.

Hale trembled violently as he finished reading the message and tucked it into a deep crevice in the rocks. "Weber Joe!" Now that he knew the names of the three he believed the long trail was about to end. From below the Snake it had started to pursue a boy. It had wound among the foot-hills and over the mountains. For long intervals it had remained broken, only to be picked up just as he was growing to believe the menace could never trail him again.

But to know their names! Weber Joe, Tod Mushet, West Burnham. Names instead of shadows! For the first time he was turning about face and ready to go down the trail to meet them. And the trail would end, whether it be he or the sons of Dan who crossed over the rim of the basin. The realization filled him with ferocious enthusiasm. Then he remembered Gorman's objection to a wholesale elimination of his enemies. One must be spared to confess the truth about Lucky Tom's death.

To the Indian Hale rapidly explained:

"I am a hunted man. There is a price on my scalp. Bad men say I killed a friend. Pretty soon I shall try to kill them, but one I shall let go so he may tell who did kill my friend. The bad men know who killed my friend. I may be killed. If I am I want you to see any of the bad men left alive and make them speak with a straight tongue."

"They shall speak," assured Black Cloud, hissing like a snake. "Your red brother remembers how to make men talk. We will bring them here and make them talk. I will make smokes to the north. The Shoshoni will answer. We will make them talk."

"It is not enough for them to tell what I already know. They must tell other men how they, three wolves, killed a miner called Lucky Tom. Then, if I am dead my spirit will be easy."

Black Cloud meditated over the matter for several minutes, then quietly said:

"They shall give the talk with a straight tongue. How are they called? How do they look?"

Hale repeated the three names until the Indian had them firmly fixed in his mind, plus the personal appearance of Mushet and Burnham. Then for good measure Hale added a careful description of Curks, emphasizing his gaunt figure and bony face until Black Cloud in great disgust grunted:

"He is a dead man! Why is he not buried? Why do they not pull his lodge down over him and move their camp to a new place, where his ghost can not make them feel afraid?"

Hale gave him Curks's name and told how he was chosen to settle disputes in Boise City. The Cloud repeated the name and asked several questions. He had been in Boise City, and, after Hale had answered his queries, he traced a diagram of the main street, indicated the location of the Tusk Saloon. Where the court-room should be designated he drew in the dirt the outline of a human head, wearing a hat; only

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the head was upside down, the sign for "death," while the hat explained it was a white man.

"If my brother dies the truth shall be known to all men, so my brother's spirit will rest. If my brother lives, all men shall know the truth so my brother will not have to hide and run. It is good."

Satisfied he had done all that was possible to protect his good name in event of death, Hale returned to the gulch and found the girl huddled in a heap under the cliff, her hair and hands covering her face. Hale said:

"Your granddaddy is all right. He's in Idaho City. He's been talking about diamonds and some of the folks up there reckon he's crazy. Patterson is trying to find out from him where you're hiding. He threatens to accuse him of passing counterfeit gold dust. Of course he can't ever prove that, but he might make some of the men believe it for a spell. They don't want him to quit town till the charge is proved or disproved. Patterson is a skunk and isn't above planting some bogus dust in the cabin. His gang has visited it once that I know of, probably several times. Did your granddaddy have any hiding-place in the cabin?"

She lifted her head and answered:

"Yes, he had a little cache. Under the floor on the right-hand side of the fireplace. They'll have to look sharp to find it. There's a tin box and five or six bags of dust in it. He worked hard in the hills to get it together. If they've stolen——"

"Of course they've stolen it if they found it. But that doesn't matter. There's enough here to make up for a thousand times what he had tucked away. But if they've stolen it and refilled the bags with the worthless article then they'd make out a case against him. I'm going to ride over to the cabin and make sure it's all right."

"I'll go with you!" she cried, jumping to her feet.

"You must stay here——"

"And wait, wait, wait! I will not."

"I can't make you stay here, Miss Harry. But you're the best card your granddaddy holds. So long as they don't find you they won't be very hard on him. But if you play right into their hands by going to the cabin——"

"What then?"

"They'd make up a charge that would put your granddaddy in jail for a spell. They've got a fool charge against me and they'll press it. That leaves you alone. You'd have to live alone in the cabin. Of course there's honest men who wouldn't see you abused; but no one's going round and blatting that they intend to abuse you. There'll be no surface signs that any one is interested in you till Patterson gives orders to his gang; then you'll disappear. If you'll wait here for a day or so, till I can come back, everything will be all right, I know. Then your granddaddy will be coming back, and everything will be pretty slick."

Fear for her personal safety did not intimidate her. But she was anxious to do whatever would make her grandfather's lot easier. Of course they could never prove him to be dishonest. That was preposterous. Yet they might nag him, and he was old and easily irritated. With a sigh she said:

"I suppose you're right. You must be. It seems an awful muddle to me. No sense in it. Patterson is in jail. I'll wait here. Black Cloud?"

"He will stay with you. He is my friend. He looks on you as the biggest kind of medicine. Tell him what to do and he'll do it. If you'll pack me a bit of meat and bread I'll saddle my mare."

Not only did he saddle the mare, but he also rolled the Mexican serape in his blanket and wore the big hat, and he took advantage of the girl's absence to procure a large bag of coarse gold from the brush shelter. Hale had not the slightest doubt concerning the stuff concealed under the cabin floor. It was worthless. Returning to the flat rock, he seized some bread and meat to eat while riding and shoved a package of food inside his blouse. Leaping into the saddle, he leaned down and took the girl's limp hand and said:

"Buck up, Miss Harry. Nothing's happened to make you fret. Nothing can happen. Everything's coming out smiling."

"But you? Isn't there danger in the trip for you? I've been forgetting that you're in hiding."

"Danger in riding across country and entering your cabin at night?" And he laughed heartily. "Bless you, child, no! I was within a dozen feet of it when the sheriff visited it."

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"But why, then, have you kept on hiding here?" she demanded.

"To be alone with you. Good-by." Without pausing to note the effect of his words he waved his hand to Black Cloud and sent the mare through the passageway.

He carried no rifle on this trip. He left the broken country behind him without sighting a human being. Late afternoon, when glare was giving place to shadow, and the plains were a sea of purple, and the depths between ridges and between turreted tops became profound abysses, and the dry heavens were filling up with a nebulous glory, the lone rider reached the river road. Among the inky shadows of some cottonwoods a pallid splotch caught his eye, and he advanced until he saw it was a placard. Pressing closer he leaned from the saddle and read:

ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS REWARD
FOR THE CAPTURE OF CALVIN HARRIS,
ALIAS CALVIN HALE, ALIAS SHOSHONI HALE.
HE IS WANTED FOR MURDER OF LUCKY TOM,
A MINER. HE IS DANGEROUS AND WILL
RESIST ARREST. TAKE NO CHANCES.
BY ORDER OF THE SHERIFF
OF BOISE COUNTY.

With an oath he tore the placard from the tree and threw it on the ground.

The sheriff's notice, however, revived his sense of caution and he turned from the road and took a course parallel to it. It was dark when he dismounted a quarter of a mile from the Prescott cabin. He left the mare in the sage-brush behind the cottonwood growth and groped his way through the timber and into the vegetable field. There was no sign of life about the cabin, but he remembered the posse's plan to use it as a trap and he took time to reconnoiter it thoroughly before venturing up to the door. The latchstring was out, and with a gentle push he sent the door open and stood to one side with a revolver in his right hand. After waiting for a few moments he stepped over the threshold and closed the door behind him.

He lost no time in fumbling along a shelf until he had located the candles. Striking a light, he soon had a candle giving off its dim illumination and then proceeded to curtain the windows with blankets taken from a couch. Having thus reduced the chances of detection from any one passing the cabin, he took up his search for the hiding place under the floor.

At the right of the fire-place he found a puncheon board which had been sawed across two feet from the wall. With the girl's instructions in mind he inserted his knife and lifted out the short section.

A rustling noise in the adjoining room reacted on him, and with a soft puff he reduced the room to darkness. He crept to the door and pushed it open. He could make out the position of the window in the end, and there was nothing between him and it. He entered and closed the door behind him and with his revolver ready passed along the wall, his left hand extended.

He touched a garment hanging from a peg and identified it as one of Miss Harry's gowns. He passed along rapidly and inventoried three other gowns or petticoats belonging to the girl. Next he investigated the other side of the room.

He was now positive he was alone in the room and yet he must satisfy himself as to the cause of the noise. Returning to the living-room and closing the door behind him, he relighted his candle and took the bold course. With his .36 cocked, and the candle held high, he kicked open the door. The room was empty.

With his problem solved he returned to the fireplace and inserted his hand through the aperture and at once encountered the tin box. Inside were six small bags well filled. All contained what appeared to be gold dust, but which he knew to be a counterfeit. The fireplace was deep with ashes, and he raked these to one side and emptied the bags. After spreading the dead ashes over the worthless stuff he produced his large bag of genuine gold and from it filled the six small bags. Then he carefully swept the floor and replaced the short piece of board.

"Now let 'em come," he muttered. "I've done all I can for you and your granddaddy, Miss Harry, and if I cash in I reckon Black Cloud will do some tall hustling to see I leave a clear name."

He extinguished the candle and listened tensely at the door before emerging. Satisfied none had come to spy, he glided forth to the mare and rode toward Placerville.

TO BE CONTINUED

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The Way of the Jungle

By A. K. Baird

DORGAN studied the man on the deck below him intently, through half-closed eyes. Cold, speculative eyes they were, peering forth from beneath the bushy overhang of heavy matted brows. He was thinking deeply the while, turning over in his mind a question that had first presented itself in the form of a vague doubt some ten hours earlier when the mysterious stranger had boarded the little river steamer in the dim, gray light of the early tropic morning. Since its original conception, this doubt had grown in intensity with each passing hour until now it assumed the proportions of a well-defined fact.

"He's a liar or I'll eat my hat."

Dorgan spoke his thoughts aloud after the fashion of white men who have been long in the heat of the tropics.

"Says he's a naturalist, bah! I can imagine a guy like him rearing around this cursed jungle for two years chasing bugs and butterflies."

For perhaps the hundredth time that day his gaze swept the person of the seated man below him; dwelt for a moment upon the faded sun-helmet, the grizzled wisp of beard roughly trimmed into a crude Van Dyke, the canvas coat and pants, and the mud-besplattered high laced boots; then focused itself intently upon a certain single object of the man's apparel and remained fixed; a cold, calculating, speculative stare.

The stranger sat cross-legged within the shadow of a huge packing-box, busily scribbling on a scrap of paper outspread upon an upraised knee. It was not so much the general appearance of the seated man that claimed Dorgan's attention, nor did the man's actions strike him as especially out of the ordinary, yet there was something—a thing that drew his gaze like the flux of a mighty magnet, a thing that held his attention riveted upon it, a thing that caused his brain to seethe with speculation and latent possibilities. Suspended from a strap across the man's shoulder hung a small leathern bag, satchel-like in shape, its corners bound with bits of brass, its top surmounted by a lock of like material.

"And he paid his passage with gold nuggets."

Dorgan removed an evil-smelling pipe and wiped his lips with the back of a hairy hand.

Lord, how he hated this torrid, fever-smitten country! What wouldn't he give to return to the States once more? He'd been gone four long years now—had skipped out to evade the draft. Anything had looked good to him then as an alternative to the trenches. Four long years—two of them spent upon this very river. Whatever else it may have lacked, the upper reaches of the Orinoco and its many tributaries had offered him a haven of safety.

But now things were different. Why

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should one remain buried in the depths of the South American jungle, wasting one's life away on a snub-nosed little stern-wheeler, constantly at the beck and call of an ignorant half-breed skipper, when there was no further necessity for doing so?

Surely by this time one could safely slip back into the States again and live once more among civilized English-speaking people without any one being the wiser. That is, if one only had the funds necessary to travel and live upon. Money will get a man anything his heart desires these days. Dorgan's thin lips twitched into the semblance of a smile. Unless he was very much mistaken a golden opportunity now lay before him; his for the plucking of it.

The lisp of a naked foot upon the planking roused him from his reverie. Captain Manuel Lopez, skipper of the river-steamer *San Fernando*, stood in the doorway of the wheel-house. The captain gave vent to a prodigious yawn, batted his bloodshot eyes at the brilliance of the afternoon sunshine, and then shambled across to a cupboard in the corner where he helped himself to a long drink from the neck of a squat, black bottle.

"How'd you make out today? Get any sleep?"

The captain's swarthy face convulsed into a distorted grimace, and he shuddered violently as the biting liquor took hold.

"Sleep," he sputtered, drawing a grimy hand across his mouth.

"Sleep! *Carocoles!* How can a man sleep with a million blood-sucking flies buzzing round him and no netting? *Nombre de Dios!* I'll stick the nigger that stole it, like a pig, if I ever lay hands on him!"

He burst forth into a torrent of Spanish profanity, and stalked over to the window.

"Find the nigger that stole it," repeated Dorgan. "Why, you drunken stiff, I seen you give it to a nigger-wench up there at Bosques, myself. Yes, sir, give it to her—made her a present of it. You're a generous sort of a guy when you're drunk, you are—and that's most of the——"

He broke off suddenly and gazed sharply at the deck below.

"Look!" he muttered, with a nod of his head.

The passenger had ceased his writing and was in the act of opening the brass-bound leathern bag. From above, Dorgan and Lopez watched the man in silence. Saw him open the bag carefully and peer inside. Then hurriedly place a folded bit of paper within it and snap shut the metal lock.

"About how much gold do you figger that bag 'ud hold?" Dorgan put the question in a low voice, his tone hard and matter-of-fact.

"Gold?" the captain repeated.

"That's what I said, gold. I'll bet my right eye that bag's full of it. Look how he hangs onto it. If there ain't something pretty valuable in it why didn't he throw it in the cabin along with the rest of his traps?"

Lopez gazed fixedly down at the man seated upon the deck below, as though endeavoring to glimpse the mysterious contents of the bag through its thick leathern walls.

"Where would he get that much gold around here?" he countered.

"He didn't get it around here. This *hombre's* been way back up at the headwaters—in the mountains—told me so himself. All the niggers up there have gold on 'em—lots of it."

Dorgan's hard eyes snapped with enthusiasm, and he noted with satisfaction an answering gleam in the beady eyes of the half-breed captain.

"We know for a fact he's got gold on him," he continued convincingly. "Didn't he pay his fare with it? Let's see them nuggets again."

Lopez fumbled in the depths of a greasy pocket and withdrew a filthy tobacco-sack from the mouth of which he poured four tiny lumps of yellow metal into the other's outstretched palm. Dorgan regarded them critically, turning them over and over and gazing at them from every angle. The largest, about the size of a pea, the smallest, little larger than the head of a match, they glittered like drops of crystallized sunlight in the grimy hand that held them. Selecting the largest, Dorgan placed it between his yellow teeth and bit down hard. It came away bearing the imprints of teeth plainly stamped into its surface.

"It's gold all right. The pure stuff."

Dorgan poured the tiny pellets into the other's palm.

"How'd you like to have a whole bagful—say about as much as that leather bag down there will hold, to split up between the two of us?"

His voice carried with it a world of meaning, and he looked into the half-breed's eyes significantly.

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Lopez stared hard at the metal in his palm, then shifted his gaze to the figure of the seated passenger below. The usual bleary appearance of his eyes had vanished. They glittered now like points of shifting fire, and a crimson flush overspread his swarthy features as with a shaking hand he returned the bits of gold to the little sack.

Dorgan crossed to the cupboard and took a drink.

"You take the wheel," he said. "I'm going down and have a little chat with our friend there."

THE *San Fernando* wheezed and puffed her tortuous way downstream upon the sullen surface of the winding river. A sluggish stream it was, twisting and squirming in and out between towering barriers of living green that rose flush with the water's edge—light, beautiful, ethereal in the golden drench of tropical sunlight.

At intervals, a slimy mud-bank, its viscous surface dotted with log-like alligators and other amphibious reptiles, pointed like a black tapering finger toward the center of the stream. Near the water's edge on either side, the steaming air hung heavy with the fetid effluvium of decaying vegetation, through which swarmed countless thousands of buzzing insects, like vibrant, ever-shifting clouds of darkness.

The passenger sat gazing listlessly across at the slow-moving panorama. He was sucking at a stubby, black-bowled pipe, his bearded cheeks collapsing into tiny furry hollows with each indrawn draft. The leathern bag lay upon the box beside him, its suspending strap dangling loosely from his shoulder.

"Pretty monotonous, ain't it?" ventured Dorgan by way of beginning a conversation. "Same old stuff all the time—no change—a feller sure does get sick of lookin' at it, don't he?"

The man beside the box removed the pipe from his lips and looked up at Dorgan with a thoughtful expression in his gray eyes.

"Yes," he agreed. "It does get a bit monotonous at times."

He returned his gaze to the wall of clambering verdure toward which the little steamer was swinging that it might avoid the sticky clutch of a muddy promontory extending far out into the stream from the opposite bank.

"But it's beautiful, gorgeously beautiful, one has to admit that. Where else in the entire world is there a scene that can rival this for vividness, for brilliance, for inimitable voluptuous beauty?"

He waved a hand toward the passing jungle-barrier.

A background of mottled green, it was splashed with multi-hued splotches of vivid color ranging from the delicate shades of drooping lilies at the water's edge to the blazing orange crests of the towering lignum-vitæs. Here clambered the flaming scarlet of the gorgeous hibiscus, there the pale pink and lavender of the trailing *silcavum*, in and out upon a trellis of living greenery.

Massive orchids of every delicate shade conceivable perched upon thick, hairy, fleshlike stems midst tender ferns and rank, lush grasses. Slender saplings and towering trees, their leafy branches entwined and bound together by countless strands of clinging, snakelike vines and creepers, rose in a perpendicular wall of verdant beauty. And over all poured the sparkling brilliancy of the tropic sunlight.

"A color scheme no artist will ever successfully transfer to canvas," mused the passenger prophetically. "It just can't be done—the colors clash so. But look how smoothly and evenly Nature does the job. Everything blends into a perfect harmony; a revel of clashing color that somehow does not offend the eye."

The speaker paused and gazed in admiration at the tangled river-bank, receding now as the steamer slowly swung back into mid-channel.

Dorgan eyed the man quizzically.

"Yeh," he said. "It is kinda pretty."

"It's beautiful, terribly beautiful," the other asserted. "Out here on the open river you never really get into intimate touch with the jungle. You ought to plunge into it and live for months in the heart of it as I have. Then you'll come to know it for what it really is. There's something diabolically human about it. It has its gay and moody spells just like any other living being. Why, you can even hear it sigh and breathe. It's uncanny, that's what it is—weird and unnatural."

Dorgan told himself the man was crazy. Aloud, he mumbled—

"Uhuh."

And fastened his eyes upon the leathern bag.

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The man beside the packing-box refilled his pipe and lighted it, then continued reminiscently.

"Lord, how I fought and hated it at first. To be forced to live constantly behind a protecting screen of netting; to shake the venomous squirming things out of my bedding before I dared to lie down; to eat pounds and pounds of stupefying quinin in an effort to prevent my ague-smitten jaws from chattering my teeth out. It was a hard and bitter fight, you can take my word for it.

"But after a time things changed a bit—that's a peculiarity of the jungle, you know. Slowly but surely it worked its warm, passionate fingers about my heart, gradually it cast its mystifying spell over my senses; inch by inch it forced itself into my very soul, and before I realized it I was a part of it. It's got me now in a grip that will never loosen—I know that as well as I know my own name. I'll come back to it again—I know that too, even before I've left it. You can't escape the jungle once it gets fairly into your blood."

The speaker ceased and gazed thoughtfully into the smoldering bowl of his pipe.

Dorgan noted a peculiarity about the leathern bag that had hitherto escaped his notice. On either side, up near the top, there was a small circular opening little larger than a fifty-cent piece, and across each opening stretched fine metal wires, in a crisscross pattern not unlike mosquito-netting. Vaguely he wondered why they should be there.

"Yup, the old jungle's sure a wicked place," he conceded, at a loss what else to say.

"Wicked?" repeated the passenger. "It's merciless as a cat. God pity the poor ignorant traveler that falls into its clutches. Ten chances to one he'll never be seen or heard from again. The jungle will embrace him in its graceful folds and hug him to death. I know—I've seen it done.

"There's a strange belief prevalent among the natives of the hill-country back there," he continued, tapping his pipe against the heel of his boot. "According to them, no criminal ever escapes, once he falls into the clutches of the jungle. It swallows him up bodily, and he never returns to his people. That's their standard of justice up there. They take all suspects deep into the mangrove swamps and leave them. If by chance they manage to struggle out and return, they stand acquitted of the charge against them; if they never return—well then it doesn't make much difference whether they were guilty or not.

"The most peculiar part of the entire scheme is that it seems to work. They've been at it now since the beginning of time, I guess, and haven't seen fit to make a change. No doubt the outraged consciences of the guilty cause them to succumb to jungle-madness more quickly than the innocent, thus giving the latter a better chance to win their way out."

Dorgan didn't like the way this man talked. There was something about the calm assurance of the man and the statements he made that gave him the creeps—made him feel very uneasy. Undoubtedly the man was crazy, no sane man ever talked like that; but just the same his words seemed to portend the coming of some inexplicable evil. He decided to change the subject.

"Yeh," he said, "them niggers have a whole lot of foolish ideas. Nothin' to 'em as a rule, though."

He walked over and lifted the leathern bag, examining it with unfeigned curiosity.

"Pretty slick little grip, that," he commented.

From the wheel-house on the deck above, Lopez watched the maneuver breathlessly. As if by accident, Dorgan carelessly upended the bag. A noise not unlike the sliding of dry gravel was the result. Quickly the man reached out and snatched the bag from Dorgan's grasp, righted it, and placed it on the box again beside him.

"Careful how you handle that," he admonished. "It's not only delicate but it's valuable."

The hoarse scream of the *San Fernando's* whistle drowned Dorgan's mumbled reply.

"What's the idea of the salute?" queried the passenger.

"Guysemos Landing on the bend ahead there. Going to stop for wood."

Dorgan turned on his heel and trotted up the stairs to the deck above.

THE *San Fernando* lay moored nose in before a rickety river-landing, her lower deck forward the scene of bustling activity. Beneath the fitful gleam of two smoking lanterns, suspended from the deck above, a half-dozen naked negroes

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worked, carrying lengths of four-foot wood from the shore and piling them upon the steamer's forward deck. Above, in the pilot-house, Lopez and Dorgan sat in earnest consultation, their low voices scarcely rising above a whisper.

Dorgan was speaking.

"It's full of gold, I tell you. Chuck full! Didn't I heft it—and hear it?"

He leaned forward, his body tense with excitement, his cold, penetrating gaze boring straight into the ratty eyes of his companion.

"But—" expostulated the half-breed.

"No buts about it. It's easy pickin's—any fool 'ud know that."

Lopez lifted the black bottle from the table and gulped down a mouthful of its contents. Overhead, a brilliantly colored moth flew in frantic circles about the sputtering light, in a vain effort to reach the dancing flame. The captain licked his lips and began again.

"But the *hombre* says——"

"Never mind what the *hombre* says. This *hombre's* loco—batty as a loon. I ought to know—I listened to him for an hour, didn't I? He's liable to say anything. What's the matter—are you yellow clear through or don't you hanker after a pot o' money?"

Lopez scowled and shrugged his shoulders.

"All right," he said. "How'll you fix him?"

"Easiest way—stick 'im and toss 'im to the 'gators. They're always hungry, eh?"

For a single instant his thin lips twitched into a sardonic smile; then he went on hastily—

"No use wasting time; might as well get it over before the loadin's finished."

He tossed a greasy pack of cards in front of the other.

"Here, shuffle 'em—low card does the job."

With quick, nervous movements Lopez shuffled the pack and spread it in a long, even line across the center of the table. Dorgan took a deep drink from the bottle.

"All right, go ahead and draw," he said.

The half-breed stretched forth a trembling hand and selected a card. Dorgan watched him in silence, his cold eyes ablaze with suppressed emotion. Outside, countless swarms of buzzing insects beat a ceaseless tattoo against the barrier of metal screening that barred them from the room's interior. About the flickering lamp overhead, the brilliant moth continued its mad gyrations.

For almost a full minute the half-breed sat staring at the back of the bit of pasteboard he had chosen, then with a twist of his wrist flipped it face up upon the table. Four glittering eyes transfixed it to the board. Before them lay the queen of hearts. Something like a sigh of relief issued from the captain's lips as he mopped the drops of perspiration from his brow.

"Not a bad little picker, are you?" mumbled Dorgan with well-feigned coolness.

He reached out a hairy hand and chose a card at random. Slowly he separated it from its fellows and then, even more slowly, began to raise one edge of it—the edge farthest from him—from the table. His gaze was not fastened upon the card, but upon his companion's face instead.

Lopez watched the slowly rising bit of pasteboard breathlessly, his eyes bulging from their sockets, his every muscle rigid with excitement. Cold beads of nervous perspiration oozed from his forehead. He sat as though hypnotized, his every faculty concentrated upon the result of the other's movements.

"*Madre de Dios! El Rey!*"

The half-breed fairly screamed the words, then slumped back loosely in his seat as the realization of their fateful import went home to him.

Dorgan dropped his eyes to the card in his hand. It was the king of spades.

"You're elected," he said briefly. "Have a drink."

He shoved the bottle across the table and rose to his feet.

"No use getting all excited about this little job," he went on briskly. "It'll be dead easy. He's down there snoring like a pig. Just a simple twist of the wrist—so—" he passed a finger suggestively across his throat—"and then nothing to do but spend your money. No more cursed steamboating for us after this night's job. It'll be—*vino, las señoritas bonitas y mucho dinero*—from now on, eh?"

Lopez twisted his face into a sickly grin and nodded. The liquor was pounding through his veins, gradually bolstering up his wavering courage. Together, they drank and planned the details of their

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attack, while overhead the circling moth continued its ceaseless spirals.

Lopez left first; his naked feet making no sound as he glided across the planking.

Dorgan took a last long drink from the bottle. Lord, it was powerful stuff. He could feel the biting liquor tingling everywhere throughout his system. Perhaps he had consumed a little too much of it. He noted his step was a bit unsteady. Oh, well, what if he had, this was a special occasion, wasn't it? He was a rich man now—that is, he soon would be.

He couldn't help feeling a bit proud of himself at the way he had engineered the whole scheme. In fact, he even began to wonder if he shouldn't have assumed the responsibility that chance had placed upon the captain's shoulders. What if the half-breed should make a bungle of it? Dorgan's sharp eyes narrowed at the thought. He crept hastily from the room and took his station beside the screened-in window of the passenger's cabin.

All was quiet within, the silence broken only by the rhythmical breathing of the sleeper. Dorgan fished into the depths of a pocket and produced a match. At a prearranged signal from the half-breed, he was to strike it, that the falling blow might not fail to reach its mark. No use risking a blind thrust in the dark, when a momentary flash of light would guide the thirsty steel unerringly to its destination.

He strained his ears for some slight sound that would indicate the half-breed's presence in the room. He could hear nothing—absolutely nothing—but the heavy breathing of the sleeper and the hammering of his own pulses against his ear-drums.

What was the matter with the fool? Why didn't he strike? He'd been in there long enough to kill a dozen men. Dorgan licked his dry lips nervously and tried with staring eyes to pierce the darkness of the room. It was black as a pit—like looking fixedly at a velvet curtain—he could see nothing. To the eastward the orange disk of the tropic moon topped the leafy summit of the jungle-barrier, painting a shimmering path of gold across the sullen surface of the river.

A harsh, rasping noise accompanied by the sibilant hiss of a Spanish oath broke the awful silence. Dorgan stiffened at the sound. The heavy breathing of the sleeper ceased. Then came a rustling noise followed by the squeak of rusty bed-springs.

"Who's there?"

The crisp interrogation fairly ripped through the silent blackness.

With a frantic upward movement Dorgan struck the match upon the screening. Followed a flash of fire as the match-head broke beneath the force of the stroke and flew in a flaming arc across the width of the window, before it snuffed out in the surrounding blackness. Brief as it was the flash sufficed to furnish Dorgan a glimpse of the room's interior.

His staring eyes noted the form of the reclining passenger, partially upraised upon a propping elbow, and bending over it the sinister shadow of the half-breed assassin. Desperately he fumbled for a second match. The sound of crashing blows and straining bodies told him of the struggle taking place there in the darkness.

Suddenly a heavy object crashed through the rusty window-screening and struck Dorgan a stunning blow in the face. He reeled backward beneath the force of the shock, clutching wildly for support. Only the railing saved him from plunging down into the river below. Quickly he regained his balance and examined the dark object at his feet. His exploring fingers encountered a smooth, bulging surface. It was the coveted leathern bag—the bag of gold!

The crashing report of a gun mingled with the agonized scream of a Spanish oath burst from the blackness of the room. Dorgan froze in his tracks, a cold nameless dread gripping him. Lopez was done for. He knew that as well as though he had seen the half-breed crumple to the deck with his own eyes.

Hastily he glanced down at the bag in his hand. In spite of the fear a wave of exultation surged over him at the sight. It was his now, all his, not merely half of it, but all of it. Even in that awful moment Dorgan remembered that possession is nine points of the law.

Beyond the blunt nose of the steamer the leafy barrier of the jungle shimmered in a flood of golden moonlight. It seemed to be beckoning him, offering him a sanctuary within its verdant depths.

The sound of hasty footsteps within the darkened room spurred him to instant action. A half-dozen leaps carried him through the little group of wild-eyed negroes forward, and out upon the rickety

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landing. A half-dozen more sped him across the moonlit clearing, and he plunged into the dark shadows of the jungle, fighting and clawing his frantic way through the tangled growth of matted verdure.

Some strange, inexplicable fear seemed to possess him, to urge him on and on ever deeper into the leafy labyrinth—a fear that for some unknown reason completely overshadowed any sense of satisfaction over possession of the treasure. Like a frightened beast he crashed his way through matted vines and creepers, squirmed over and under the gnarled and twisted stilt-like roots of towering trees, wallowed through Stygian depths of frond-choked hollows, until at last he dropped and slept from sheer exhaustion, his fingers clutching the brass-bound bag beneath him.

IN THE sweltering heat of his little cane and bamboo office Hanford Edward Ramsey sat poring over a desk piled high with papers. Aside from the fact that he was representative agent for the Imperial Fruit Co., Ltd., Ramsey enjoyed the further distinction of being the sole white resident of the little thatch-roofed village.

As a rule he refused to make a practise of working during the heat of the day, but upon this particular occasion necessity demanded it. He must have his annual report of the year's business ready for inspection before the arrival of the next river-steamer; an event that was due to take place at most any moment.

He slapped savagely at a buzzing insect, then bent lower over his work. So engrossed was he with his task he failed to notice the black shadow that suddenly loomed up in the sunlit doorway until a harsh, cackling laugh smote his ears. Ramsey started at the unearthly sound and glanced up hurriedly, his eyes falling upon a sight that sent chills racing along his spine.

There in the brilliant sunshine of the doorway swayed a sniffling, gibbering creature that at one time must have been a man. Plastered from head to foot with streaks of stinking river-mud, its features bloated and bruised beyond all hope of recognition, the grisly specter leered at him through swollen slits in its revolting countenance.

"It's a lie—a nigger lie—no such thing as jungle justice! Got away didn't I—proved it's a lie!"

The creature rocked to and fro on its swollen feet, and again the cackling laugh issued from its lips. Ramsey recognized the sound for the laugh of a madman, and his hand dropped to the butt of the revolver at his hip.

"Want a canoe and paddlers—and I got the money to pay for 'em."

The uncouth being tottered forward and plumped a mud-caked leathern bag down upon the littered desk. Ramsey hastily shoved back his chair and pulled the gun from its holster.

"Show you somethin' that'll make your eyes bug out."

The stranger seized a heavy knife from among the papers on the desk, and began diligently prying at the lock of the mud-stained bag; strange, inarticulate mouthing noises issuing from his battered lips the while.

Ramsey rose to his feet and watched the man in awed silence.

There came a sharp click of snapping metal as the lock yielded beneath the pressure of the blade. Quickly the stranger dropped the knife and thrust his hand within the opened bag. His eyes glittered like points of dancing fire, and the semblance of a triumphant smile distorted his swollen features.

"Look at this," he croaked, withdrawing his hand and holding it forth for inspection.

Ramsey looked hard at the swollen palm before him. It contained nothing more than a few grains of common gravel—gravel such as may be found in quantities in any rocky or mountainous country. He glanced up quickly into the stranger's face. Never had he seen an expression of blank dismay that would equal the look on the face before him.

For perhaps a minute the man stood staring at the rocky granules in his palm, then with a growl of rage he plunged his hand deep down into the contents of the bag, pawing frantically. Ramsey stepped back a pace and pulled down the hammer of his gun. There was something so diabolically fearful about the gleam in those mad eyes—it frightened him.

The pawing within the bag suddenly ceased as abruptly as it had begun. The stranger's bearded jaw sagged, and a look of unspeakable terror froze his features. For a fraction of a second he stood as if paralyzed with fright; then a fearful scream

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burst from his hairy throat—and he bolted, bag and all, from the room.

Nonplused by this unexpected action, Ramsey sprang to the door in time to see the terror-stricken creature plunge headlong into the jungle. Without stopping to consider why, he darted across the narrow clearing in pursuit, and crashed through the tangle of leafy growth, hot upon the trail of the fleeing madman.

When perhaps a hundred yards in from the clearing, Ramsey suddenly halted and peered forward intently. Through a leafy vista in the matted foliage he could see a clump of ferns and grasses tossing and swaying as if violently agitated by some struggling body in their midst.

Gun in hand, he advanced cautiously, but before he reached the spot the foliage had ceased to quiver. Carefully he parted the matted grasses and peered within, an exclamation of horrified surprize bursting from his lips at the sight which met his eyes.

Stretched at full length among the clambering vines and creepers lay the rigid body of the stranger, one dead hand clutching the writhing coils of a tiny, yellow serpent.

Aghast at the sickening spectacle, Ramsey turned to move away, when his foot came in contact with some object hidden among the grasses. A prod of his booted toe revealed a leathern bag—the one which the stranger had carried—and protruding from it a bit of folded paper, half-buried beneath a heap of gravel. Quickly he stooped and snatched the paper from its resting-place, then gingerly unfolded it and scanned the penciled lines within:

DEAR PROFESSOR:

Am mailing the little jungle citizen I promised you, secure in a bed of his own native gravel, and feel certain that in such homelike surroundings he will arrive none the worse for his long voyage to a distant clime. Would advise extreme caution in handling him until you pull his fangs, as he comes from a family of the most venomous vipers in South America, and is as poisonous as he is bad-tempered. The natives call him *Morido Amarillo*, meaning Yellow Death, which alone should speak volumes for his reputation. Am sure he'll make an interesting addition to your collection. Expect to see you soon.

HARPER.

The distant wail of an approaching steamer sent the perplexed Ramsey hurrying back to his unfinished task in the clearing.

From his lofty perch, in the leafy poll of a towering *cuepa*, a bright plumed parrot shrieked derision at the laboring steamer; while in the silent depths below, a delicate, green tendril was slowly creeping across the stiffening body of the dead man.

Already the tireless jungle was at work, spreading a trailing mantle of creeping foliage above the unsightly stain upon its verdant beauty.

THE DRUMS

by Berton Braley

TUMPY-tum-tump; tumpy-tum-tump—
Hark to the sound of the drums.
Tumpy-tum-tump; tumpy-tum-tump;
The beat and the thud that you feel in your blood,
The heart-shaking rhythm that comes
With thunder and throb of the drums,
The Drums! The Drums!
R-r-rat-a-tat-tat, r-r-rat-a-tat-tat, r-r-rat-a-tat-tat, and boom!
Way for the drums, make room!

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For the roll of the drums is a time-honored tone—
The mightiest music the planet has known.
It rumbled its summons to primitive man—
Reverberant rhythm that gathered the clan.
It beat out a challenge to frighten the foe
And thudded a dirge for the warriors laid low.
The Drums! The Drums!
Oh, down all the ages there comes
The echoing boom of the drums;
Drums out of Egypt and drums from Cathay,
Rolling a thunderous note through the fray.
Roman and Greek,
Saxon and Frank
Heard the drums speak—
Rank upon rank
Answered the call with a deep-throated roar;
Wild drums of Attila, Red Scourge of War,
Spread the loud tidings of horror and fear;
So, through the centuries ever we hear

Drums sounding slowly and drums beating fast
Over the world in a symphony vast;
Down to the depths of our nature it plumbs,
(Tumpy-tum-tump! Tumpy-tum-tump!)
Militant surge of the drums!
The Drums! The Drums!
They stir us from sloth that benumbs,
Bass drums and kettle-drums thundering loud,
Snare drums that startle and hearten the crowd,
Lifting the soul as they quicken their beat,
Throbbing with triumph and mocking defeat,
Voice of adventure and vaunt of romance,
Daring the wrath of the grim gods of chance—
All in the rhythm that dauntlessly comes
Out of drums! Out of the drums!

Tumpy-tum-tump! Tumpy-tum-tump!
Hark to the sound of the drums.
Tumpy-tum-tump! Tumpy-tum-tump!
The beat and the thud that you feel in your blood—
The heart-shaking rhythm that comes
With thunder and throb of the drums!
R-r-rat-a-tat-tat; r-r-rat-a-tat-tat; r-r-rat-a-tat-tat and boom!
Way for the drums, way for the drums,
Way for the drums—make room!

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The Strangest Man in Harr

by Frederick P. Ladd

FORGIVE the laughter at the idea that any man who did such a thing as to remain in Harr would not be strange! The town, shut in from the outside world, nestled in a pocket of the mountains. All it did was to nestle. It was so hot in the pocket in Summer that a fellow had to get up by four in the morning to loaf successfully and then pant and gasp until long after sundown to recover from his exertions. In Winter, all the tough weather in the United States and some from Siberia found its way into the pocket—and stuck around.

Summer or Winter, the moonshine of the locality had a mule-power kick, but the natives were too tired to notice it. Black persons did all the work in Harr, and none was done. The "mayor" of the town was ill when he was not intoxicated. Drummers rarely hesitated at Harr, and the train whistles shrieked while passing through.

The strangest man in Harr—as I came to know—was George Slemp. He lived in the uneasy, tottering frame dwelling fourth down the main street after you struggled past the two dismal stores and the blacksmith shop, which was open only Sundays, when the leading citizens played poker there. Across the street, opposite George's dwelling, stood the remains of the house of a man who once had thought Harr could be a town.

Now it was in ruins, except that when you went up the precarious steps you found one front room in the residence occupied by Thomas Jefferson Morrissey, shoe-repairer to Harr. Thomas was like as not to be partly sober unless the weather interfered. He did the best he could at his trade when he was able to sit up.

THE information I have here set down about Harr was not gained at once. It came to me by degrees, through observation and the medium of George Slemp himself. The day I arrived in Harr I picked out George from the group on the station platform because of his air of detachment. He seemed to be thinking. His weather-beaten face was surmounted by a hat which I judged had been a favorite hat for several years.

"Good evening," said I, after the manner of the country. "Is it going to rain?"

He gave me as fair a look as I ever had from a human being and slowly twisted the end of his curling sandy mustache in such a way that involuntarily I twisted my mustache; he made me feel like a comrade.

"Well, I don't want to be short with you, but I should say it's goin' to do as it durn pleases."

"You're truthful," said I.

"I aim to be," he answered.

"My card," said I.

He read it carefully.

WILKINS AGNEW

INTRODUCING THE STODDARD BROTHERS' WASHING-MACHINE, BEST IN THE WORLD

"My name is Slemp," he said, "George Slemp. I ain't introducin' anything."

"We should not be in competition, then; have you a home?"

"Yes."

"Could you give a room and board in it?"

"I'm bachin'," he said soberly.

Yet there was a fine little light of welcome away back in his kind eyes.

"You wouldn't mind taking me in for a few weeks, would you? I'd get meals somehow."

He appraised me thoroughly.

"The Strangest Man in Harr," copyright, 1921, by Frederick P. Ladd.

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"You want to make headquarters with me, and sort of sell washin'-machines in the territory 'round here?"

"That's it."

"You can stay with me. The sellin' washin'-machines is up to you."

"Certainly."

He smiled in a way that made me feel as though I had known George Slemp all his life. There was something of the Eternal in it.

"Come on," he said.

So it was that I went to sojourn with George Slemp in the town of Harr.

GEORGE and I got on famously. If we had not, I should have cut very short my stay in Harr. Not only the town itself but its environs for a radius of fifteen miles appeared to be antagonistic to the remarkable washing-machine which I had the honor of representing. The only way I could sell, usually, was by offering as a premium some highly colored toilet soap. Thus I occasionally lured a customer.

This did not seem strictly ethical to me, and I told George so, as we sat smoking after our evening meal at the end of a particularly vile February day. I had been blessed with little luck, the roads had been horribly rough and nothing seemed ethical.

George puffed at the very last end of a cigaret and threw the stub into the fireplace.

"Maybe 'tain't ethical, but it looks necessary," he said.

He sat and thought for some minutes, with his hands folded. Finally he spoke. "Mr. Agnew, what I'm goin' to do tonight prob'ly ain't ethical, either. But I'm goin' to do it, and I want your help."

I nodded assent, wondering what it could be, for his voice was strangely quiet, and deep.

"I'm askin' if you're willin' to come with me and see that it's reg'lar as fur as possible?"

He looked steadily at me, some kind of a trouble in his eyes that touched me. This was no light matter.

"I'll go," I said.

The penetrating rawness of the day had given place to a night which for the time of year was singularly warm. A sudden shift of wind presaging probably a torrential rain before morning drove clouds across a moon the like of which I had never seen, as George Slemp and I rode horseback out of the dismal, the forsaken, the godforsaken town of Harr.

Why was the feeling so strong upon me? I could not tell, but it weighted my heart.

Not until we had gone a distance, I judged, of three miles, did the ceaseless, steady *clump-clump* of George's mare suddenly stop as he reined up and swung about to face me:

"Mr. Agnew, it lays like this: There's a feller in my back bedroom with a hole in his thigh where the revenue officers got him when he was ridin' in after sundown to git help for his woman. It's Jim Rhodes. Nobody'd take him in, and he went to Tom Morrissey's, and Tom was too drunk only to push him down the steps where he lay there. I carried him into my house, and threw ha'f a grain of morphine into him. He's quiet, but he cain't go back. Couldn't make it. The revenuers'll be waitin' at the fork in the road. It goes to his place. They got his still yesterday, and he killed one of 'em, run for his shack and lay low till this evenin'. They're firin' to kill on him when they see him. The woman lies alone and maybe dyin'. There's a little life with hers—to come into the world. I got to git to her. Now——"

"But George! The officers are waiting for Rhodes and they'll get you——"

"I know the road, and I'll ride like —— when they open up—if they touch me some, I reckon I can git past—"

"We've got to explain——"

"No time, no chance for explainin'. They're waitin' to git their man. The fork goes to his place and nowhere else. No use ridin' up to 'em and git shot in yo'r tracks. I got to ride past and git through."

The sweeping flash of a powerful searchlight lay suddenly on the road ahead of us.

"They're playin' it—I knew they had it. You cain't go another inch—wait here and listen for firin'. Then after that firin', listen. If you hear four shots from my automatic, fired slow—I got through."

He wheeled and rode so quickly into the night that I lost him before I could have said a word.

Years, very many years may pass, and I shall not again know the fierce exultation, the pride in my human kind that I knew as I waited those immortal minutes. So simply had this man gone to duty or death that its glory thrilled me.

The night winds seethed through the

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mountains. The clouds scudded across the greenish shattered moon like dare-devil shadows of fate. And now the search-light, sweeping every foot of field or glen on either side suddenly covered the road with its merciless glare. No man could pass unseen —perhaps no man could escape the withering fire of the crew that somewhere lay behind rocks with their rifle-sights in the trail of light— I breathed a prayer as the firing began. He had ridden cautiously till the glare of day struck him—Now I knew he was running his gantlet.

So fast was the first fusillade of shots that I could not begin to count them. Then there was a lull.

To my strained senses it seemed that I could almost hear the furious clatter of the rider over the rough narrow road . . .

The search-light swung a little . . .

There was a second series of shots, less in number and more scattered. The last two were borne to me on the breeze with startling distinctness—*Pump! Pump!*

Once more the search-light shifted and swept field and glen and road.

And suddenly was not.

I looked at my watch by the flare of a match. Twenty-four minutes past eight. It had seemed in that remote country like the dead of night. Soon I ought to hear the four separated shots of George Slemp, if he lived. If he lived! He could not have gone down at the first ambush, or there would have been no second series. Had one of those found him? Perhaps the very last I had heard?

My heartbeat slowed and sank. A chill of apprehension ran through me. I got down from my mount, and laid my head against the mare's neck and waited.

I consulted my watch again and again, covering the match flare by my coat each time.

It went to twenty-five minutes of nine.

In two or three minutes I heard a shot.

"What will the revenue officers think of it?" was my instant thought.

There was another shot. Another. And a fourth.

George had beaten them! He was safe within quick distance of Jim Rhodes' cabin! Safe for awhile. The officers would not ride there thinking their man inside. Built of logs and stocked like forts were these cabins of the moonshiners. They were all made alike in that country of ravine and rock and bitter hatred of the law.

I rode back and into the dismal town of Harr with a certain sense of relief.

A little later something of foreboding came, with the downpour of rain. I heard its swift rush on the roof as I attended the wounded man in George Slemp's bedroom. He was surly in his delirium. A black haired fellow with a low forehead, which sweated constantly.

IT WAS toward noon next day before I could start for Rhodes' cabin to carry supplies. No one of the men in town would go with me. The peasantry breed generally is distrustful of anything that might injure its hide.

What was to the point, however, I had found a woman, a silent creature of forty-five or forty-eight, who consented to go to give what help she could. There was no doctor for miles around.

I hired Harr's one auto, to drive to the fork in the road; that was as near as a machine could go. The road was bad enough even thus far. I left the car turned toward Harr, and we made our way on foot in red clay mud ankle-deep. I carried the basket of supplies; I bore no rifle, and thought it likely that if the revenue men were still watching in broad day they would hardly halt us long—a man and a woman going on an errand of mercy, as we could explain.

We were not molested. The country was silent as a desert.

There was the faintest curl of smoke from the cabin chimney as we approached. There was no sound within when I lightly knocked.

I opened the door. A woman, sleeping the sleep of exhaustion, lay upon the bed with a sleeping infant upon her bosom. The room was tidied and a pitcher of fresh water stood at the head of the bed within reach.

Where was George? Surely he had been nowhere about as we came up.

"Thar's another room," whispered the woman I had brought with me, "in hyar."

She pushed a narrow door I had not noticed, and we stepped in.

Lying upon his side, with his face toward the light of the curtainless window, the room's one little window—was George Slemp. His hand was across his breast quite naturally, yet it covered the wound that had killed him. Shot through the lung. It was plain enough to me as I raised him up and examined him.

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Evidently he had done what was to be done for the woman in the next room before he came in here.

How many hours?

What agony?

I looked up at the woman beside me and nodded toward the other room.

"Better not let her know, at present."

"I reckon not. She was his wife till she done left George and took up with Rhodes."

Snarky's Alki Party

by Lloyd Kohler

THREE hundred miles or more off the coast of Florida and the Carolinas a squadron of American dreadnoughts maneuvered, played and wallowed gracefully in the warm, inky blue waters of the Gulf Stream. At the command of their respective executive officers they took up one position after another only to fall back into line. Then, as the varicolored signal-flags climbed swiftly to the yard-arm of the flag-ship, they steamed quickly and scientifically into another perplexing formation.

Up on the flag-ship's bridge the white-haired old admiral, binoculars in hand, played his game with a knowing smile and with short, brief commands moved his ships as a player moves his chessmen. And as he was not an amateur in the game of naval warfare the younger blood of the commissioned rank watched his every move with determination to profit from the old master's strategy. For this was their game.

But on the decks below and in the turrets the barefooted gobs in sleeveless undershirts and white trousers rolled to bare knees scurried about on their thousand errands and merely glanced at these things; glanced, understood and then forgot. Theirs was another game.

Both on the quarterdeck and on the forecastle of the monster gray battleship, bare-footed seamen were busily clearing ship for action. The gangways were being hoisted up and secured to the main-deck bulkheads of their respective galleries. The morrow would bring an eventful day; a day looked forward to by some with joyous anticipation; by others, dread. Target practise—and the big guns' roar.

Back aft on the quarterdeck the after twelve-inch turret's crew was industriously swabbing out the muzzles of the great twin, twelve-inch guns. Up forward on the forecastle the same work was in progress; rival crews of twin turrets who tomorrow would match their wits, their skill and even their paltry pay checks on their respective chances of supremacy.

But up in the first whale-boat, apparently utterly oblivious to these intense preparations, Snarky, coxswain of the first lifeboat's crew, sweated and raved as he sanded and canvased his fourteen oars. He had plied sand and water, canvas and elbow-grease upon his own big steering-oar until

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it shone to as fine an advantage as the bird's-eye maple furnishings of a corpulent trust company. But the other fourteen failed to take on the same desired gloss. He assured himself that it was disgusting work.

Standing, or rather leaning, in the bow of the whale-boat swinging from its davits high out over the water, Snarky was an interesting, even an imposing, figure. He was somewhat slender and yet broad, without being in either sense of the words slim or dumpy; and his hair was as absolutely white as his complexion red. His broad and permanent smile was as natural as his friendly blue eyes.

From all outward appearances he might have been the son of some conquering Norse viking; and there were some who said—but this is doubtful—that he was a Swede, and persisted in calling him such. Regardless of what he was, or who his ancestors were, there was no contention as to his knowledge of seamanship. He was a sailor from the marrow to the hide.

Tiring of his efforts at cleaning the oars, he swung himself down the ladder to the quarterdeck just as two of the bare-footed and rather excited seamen reached the spot.

"Hey, Snark," bawled the shorter of the couple, a stout, dark little Italian with beady black eyes; "we're going to show those forward turret birds a few points on gun firin' tomorrow, ain't we?"

Snarky smilingly pulled himself up as if expecting another broadside and waited, his long white hair crawling out from beneath the white hat resting on the back of his head. There was no further remark. He looked from one to the other inquiringly.

"Well," he asked, "I ain't said we can't show 'em anything we want to: gunnery, sailin' and tackin', acey-deucey, or anything else, have I?"

"You haven't heard the report, then?" inquired the taller seaman.

"Report! That's all I've heard for six years, just reports. Which one? Slobber it out!"

The little Italian did not hesitate about giving explanations about reports or, for that matter, anything else. He was always abrupt and often fiery.

"The regular gun-pointers in the forward turret ain't goin' to fire tomorrow."

He shot the words from his lips as if he expected them to knock the composed coxswain from his feet, but they had no such effect and the little Italian rambled on.

"I heard Lieutenant Stone tell Lieutenant Farnell this morning that he had decided to use the best pointers he had. They're all picked men, rated first-class heavy-gun-pointers. Farnell told him that he wasn't going to pick his men but would use his regular pointers, and that our regular pointers would beat his picked men."

"And what did Lieutenant Stone say then?" questioned Snarky.

"Told him he was just crazy."

"We'll show 'em who's loco tomorrow. Did you find out who their picked men are?" the white-haired coxswain demanded not unconcernedly.

" 'Spic' McGill, that new bo's'n's mate, is the elevating pointer; and 'Dutch' Schaeffer, that second-class gunner's mate, is the trainer; and the firing pointer is old 'Rats' Masters. Every one of them is an old head and a rated first-class pointer. Rats was on the old *Texas* in the fray at Santiago."

"Looks like we'll have to produce the real stuff, fellers—'at's all I've got to say," mused Snarky.

"Per-duce—you say!" exclaimed the taller seaman. "Then you think we can beat 'em anyway?"

Snarky pondered a second before answering. There was no doubt in his voice when he ventured his opinion.

"We've got as good a run for the grapes as they have and it's what I'd call a safe bet. Just because they're all rated first-class pointers don't say they'll beat the after turret's reg'lar pointers. I'm a rated pointer myself—and that don't guarantee that I won't miss the target as wide as a green boot."

Evidently the little Italian was not yet satisfied.

"Lowsinger, the firing pointer, ain't what you can call experienced," he parried, "and Kane, the trainer, is a new man. You're the only rated pointer of the three."

"They're as good as I am, and I say they're winners. I'm tellin' yuh if any one blunders tomorrow it will be one of the gun crew, as usual, and not the pointers. They're always so blasted cock-sure of themselves."

"I suppose that was a stab at us," laughed the taller man. "Well, I hope

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you're right about the pointers, and I half-believe you are. They're gettin' up a pot in the first division and they've got two hundred dollars up on their turret already. We've covered that, but they claim they've got lots more to be covered. We've each got twenty-five plunks in the pot that says you're right. What do you say, Snark? Money talks!"

Snarky appeared worried.

"Fellers, I aint a piker—an' you know it. The old man granted me a twenty-day furlough yesterday; then he held me over for firin' 'cause Mr. Farnell requested it."

He stooped down and extracted a roll of green and yellow backed bills from the inside of his sock.

"Here's a hundred and eighty plunks, and it takes about a hundred and forty-five of them for car-fare both ways, as near as I can figger. That's thirty-five dollars left for twenty days, an' 'at's pretty slim. I was goin' today, but Farnell said he just had to beat the forward turret this time and he'd be a gonner if I left before—gave me that old line."

He paused and stared thoughtfully at the wet, sandy deck. Both seamen knew these moods of the tow-headed coxswain and were too wise to interrupt them. When he looked up his blue eyes met the little Italian's black ones squarely.

"I'm goin' to tell you birds something I've never told any one else, 'cause I was ashamed to. I've been in this man's outfit for goin' on seven years, an' in all that time I've never been home once to see my old mother, an' "—he dropped his eyes—"she says she's waitin'. It ain't 'cause I never wanted to go, an' it ain't 'cause I've never had a furlough—I've had a-plenty.

"But ever'time just before I found the depot I ran afoul a good drink, or bumped inter a fight, or else maybe I seen a game around the corner in an alley; an' ever'time I got to the ticket window and started to count—there wasn't nothin' to count.

"Then I'd go inter some high-brow hotel an' pick up some loose paper an' an envelope off of a writin'-desk when nobody was lookin', and then I'd go back to the Ninety-Sixth Street landing. An' sittin' out on the end of the pier waitin' for our five-o'clock boat I'd get my hotel paper an' an envelope, an' with the Hudson River runnin' under my feet an' my mind runnin' to Kansas I'd write an' tell her how I got the mumps an' couldn't come, or maybe smashed a foot, or the ship stood out to sea, or maybe—well—I'd always have to lie."

"That's good, Snark," the little Italian broke in desperately. "You don't need to tell us those things. We know you're not a piker when it comes to turnin' loose of a pay check—we ought to know that. If you was goin' home—go, and luck to you."

"You'll do your part anyway," broke in the taller seaman, "and we'll get enough to cover them birds somehow. I ain't forgot yet how you dropped two twelve-inch shells through the same hole at eleven thousand yards, last July. They said it was luck, then—but you have that kind of luck too often to be just plain luck. Say, there goes that bird Hawkshaw—the king of the punt-scullers. Come on, Pete, he's got a baby mint—that bird. Just drop three shells through the same hole tomorrow, Snark, and we'll sign a petition to make you an admiral—gold braid, stars, 'n'everything."

SNARKY smiled as the little Italian from the Bronx and the tall seaman from the Hoosier State hurdled an entanglement of life-lines and stanchions in an effort to catch the grimy side-cleaner before he could disappear below decks. He started slowly after them, meditating and hoping in a vague way that they would be able to cover every dime of the rival division's money. He was startled from his musings by a commanding voice behind him calling his name. Even before he could turn he recognized the owner of the voice. It was Hal Benner, the master-at-arms.

"Snark, I want you to fall in with my line-up today—in number eleven gun compartment." He answered the question which he saw in the coxswain's face before it could be asked. "No, I don't know what you're up for; drinkin' alki, I think I heard the old boatswain say. Better shake a leg, Snark. It's about over now—for the love of—of—of Buzzy-Boo, don't make the old man wait. The old man is on his ear today—reg'lar ol' walrus."

And then the master-at-arms hurried on after "that new bird, Victorio, that's got a watch-cap in the lucky bag."

"Drinkin' alki!" Snarky was puzzled, but he hurried aft to number eleven gun compartment. He had been in the "line-up" more than once and he knew the consequences of keeping the old man waiting.

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He fell in at the foot of what, fifteen minutes before, had been a long "line-up" —there were now only three men left, except for a separate line of five men who were standing by for requests. He had noticed the old skipper raise his quizzical blue eyes momentarily as he had stepped to the foot of the line—but that was all. Evidently the old man was disposing of them in short order. He observed the captain closely, trying in his own peculiar way to analyze the old skipper's mood, for although he knew nothing of the principles of psychology experience had taught him many of those little characteristics of the skipper which stood for little or meant much.

"The ole man ain't in very good humor today," he mused. "He's twistin' his mustache—and he's got his right foot on the round of the bench—he's sure to be thinkin' of court martials."

"Snarky!" the sharp voice of the master-at-arms calling his name brought him suddenly to earth.

Almost automatically he stepped three paces forward, faced the bench and in a few more steps stood before it, saluted and uncovered his head.

ALTHOUGH he had been in this same position a number of times before it was the first time Snarky realized the opportunity it offered to study the old man at close quarters. For a brief moment the captain looked steadily at him, and he as steadily at his judge. The thought raced through his mind; what a picture of a man the old skipper was. Snarky, himself an athlete, never tired admiring him. Although a score past the middle span of life his military figure was supreme among his fellows. But it was his face which impressed one most. It was full and of the complexion which reminded one of very red, fine wines.

Contrasted sharply against this admirable background was a noble, snow-white, military mustache, while from beneath the rim of his cap protruded a narrow ledge of hair, snow-white, to match. Two appropriate bits of turquoise, for eyes, as penetrating as they were blue and spaced equidistant from a slightly misplaced Apollo Belvedere nose, finished the picture.

"What's your trouble, Snarky? You've managed to keep out of this line for quite a while."

The captain looked at him steadily for a moment and although the coxswain met his gaze as steadily he made no attempt to answer.

The boatswain, an adipose old salt of the sluggish variety, stepped out from the little group of officers who stood beside the bench.

"Capt'n, I put that man on report. I made an inspection of the boats and their equipment this morning. This man is the coxswain of a life-boat crew, and his boat is used as a life-boat, yet his compass was absolutely out of order; not a drop of alcohol—drained dry." The boatswain glared at Snarky as he concluded his accusation. "Drinked it—I reckon!"

"That's a pretty serious offense, Snarky. Had a little alki party all to yourself, eh. Some of you birds must have pig-iron bellies, but you've got to leave the alcohol on this ship alone. I hate to do it, but I'll have to make an example of you, Snarky. It's too bad since your furlough was to start the day after tomorrow, but I'll have to cancel that indefinitely until you get over your foolishness. I'm going to give you a summary court martial this time—that will give you something to think of besides alcohol."

"Sir, I—" exploded the dumfounded coxswain.

"Never mind explanations now," cut in the skipper; "you'll be entitled to them at your trial. Master-at-arms! Put this alki fiend in the brig; he is going to be an example; give him regular meals until his trial however."

The master-at-arms led the bewildered coxswain to the brig, asked for the number of his sea-bag and hammock, closed the steel door behind him and went back after the bag and hammock.

Snarky sat down on the steel deck and rummaged his mind for the cause of his new predicament. He had not touched a drop of ship's alcohol for seven months; that was when eleven of his shipmates and himself had outwitted the quarterdeck sentry and relieved an alcohol chest of twelve gallons, with the whole ship's company on a spree in consequence. But the big spree was at their expense. He, with his fellows, had done five days of bread and water at that time, and evidently the old man had not yet forgotten it. But this affair was different—it puzzled him.

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He jumped to his feet as he heard a key inserted in the padlock of his cell-door. The master-at-arms admitted the chief storekeeper, a close friend of Snarky's, and closed the door behind him.

"In again, eh?" the storekeeper queried.

"Yes, it looks that way," admitted Snarky. "The trouble is that I can't figure it out. The boatswain told the old man that my boat compass was drained—and of course, I'm responsible if I drank it or not. They handed me a summary court martial."

"Come on, Snark. Don't tell your sidekick you didn't drain your compass. Why didn't you let me in on it? 'Fess up, as the little kids say."

" 'Fess nothin', Bill! I don't savvy this affair at all, an' the ole man didn't give me a chance to say a word—decided to hang me on my past breaks, I reckon. I don't even know that my compass is empty now, only that the boatswain said so." There was no mistaking the sincerity of the coxswain's voice. "All I know," he added glumly, "somebody's queered my furlough."

The key again turned in the lock outside, and the master-at-arms swung open the door.

"Guess the 'Jimmy-Legs' thinks I've been here long enough, but if there's any mystery about this alki party—" the storekeeper winked and shook his head encouragingly— "I'll try to investigate. So long, Snark."

As he stepped through the door he pitched a small package back into the corner of the cell, and the next instant the steel door closed behind him, leaving the coxswain alone with the package.

"Good ol' Bill," he commented. "He took a chance on getting himself in bad just to smuggle in some cigarets and matches. And he said he would investigate," he added hopefully, "and if there's any chance for me he'll find it."

THAT evening the mess-cook who brought him his ration told him that Mr. Farnell was making every effort to get him out, at least, for the firing. The lieutenant had told the turret's crew that the captain had practically consented to let them use Snarky during the firing. They had been disgusted with their prospects of making a showing against the forward turret's picked men, he said, but since Farnell had told them that their elevating pointer would be allowed to come to his battle station they were again in good spirits.

As the mess-cook started to leave, Snarky stooped down and extracted the roll of bills from the inside of his sock.

"Here," he said, "when you get up on deck, look up Pete, the little wop, and tell him here's my hundred and eighty dollars. Tell him I want to bet it; my furlough's queered anyway. If those forward turret birds are so flush with coin, maybe that will cover some. And," he yelled as the master-at-arms closed the door behind the mess-cook, "tell the fellows I'll do all I can tomorrow if the ol' man lets me fire."

The next morning long before reveille the master-at-arms awakened him. He took his morning bath, and was relieved of his hammock according to the rules for brig prisoners. Under his ration that morning, wrapped neatly in paper, he found five cigarets and a half-dozen matches. Either the mess-cook had a big heart, also, or he evidently had been in similar circumstances at some time. During the long morning hours Snarky sat on the steel deck in the farthermost corner so that the smoke would not drift through the little round holes in the door of his cell and give him away, for brig prisoners are never allowed to smoke.

Here he sat and meditated, and wondered when the firing would commence, and if he would be called to his battle station. And at frequent intervals he found himself wondering what kind of excuse he would give his old mother this time—the old mother who had waited seven years. As he wondered and attempted to plan with a vacant mind, little globules of moisture welled up in the corners of his blue eyes, rolled down the sides of his nose to the corners of his mouth and fell to the deck.

His noon-day ration was brought and eaten and still the firing had not commenced. But soon after four bells the key again turned in the padlock to his cell and as the door swung open the head of the "Jimmy Legs' appeared.'

"You're wanted at your battle station in the after turret—the old man's orders. Better speed along they're about ready to commence firing."

Snarky lost no time. As he hurried up the ladder to the gun-deck he heard the final

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injunction of the master-at-arms hurled after him—

"And when the cease-firing gong is sounded you come back to the cell."

As Snarky reached the main deck his trained eyes took in the situation at a glance. The decks were absolutely deserted. Not even one loiterer was in view; every man was at his battle station. Once he was on the quarterdeck, a momentary glance in the direction pointed out by the muzzles of the monster guns told him that the ship was swinging on the range and that the firing would begin in a very few minutes.

IF THERE were any hatred, any dissension, any will not to do the utmost, before, it had no room in his thoughts now. The supreme test of the year was about to begin, and his determination to make his turret score the high mark became a sort of obsession. As he breathlessly poked his head up through the hatch into the turret and pulled his body up after, he heard the encouraging voice of Lieutenant Farnell—

"It's all right, fellows—all it takes to win we've got now."

And as he passed the lieutenant there seemed something of a plead in his superior's voice as he said:

"Show us a bit of your old form today, Snark. We've got to put it over."

But there was no promise in his eyes as he looked vaguely at his lieutenant for an instant; then, without even glancing at the members of the gun crew, he mounted the pointers' stand, removed the cap from the telescope and wiped the lenses with a small piece of lens paper which had been placed there in readiness. This was but the work of a second, then the stillness of the turret was broken by his low, sharp voice.

"Trainer, train on the target—quick!"

It was the first words he had spoken since leaving the brig, and the grim steadiness of his voice both startled and thrilled him. The electrically driven turret immediately began turning and the target came in view.

"All right, trainer—firing pointer—let's check up. Right a little, trainer, just a hair—mark—mark."

And after the trainer had been checked up he turned to the firing pointer. The huge, twin guns elevated ever so slightly at his trained touch, then, from beyond the partition, the voice of the firing pointer on the left gun could be heard distinctly, "Mark—mark—mark—mark." Snarky swung the huge guns back to the firing position.

"All right, fellows," he bellowed through the voice tube. "Now listen!"

A falling pin could have been heard striking the steel deck by every member of the crew, if one had been dropped. Not only the firing pointer and the trainer, but every man in the after turret, the lieutenant included, listened.

"If you birds want to beat the forward turret today, you've got to get the first shot in *first*. Both turrets fire on the same buzzer, but if the forward turret fires first the concussion will throw us off. But if we can get the first shot first, we'll get the second shot first, and the third shot first, savvy? They're all ol' heads at this game and they're goin' to fire first if they can get on the target quick enough, but you fellows ought to beat them there. You've been training ever' day. Remember—if we can beat them to the first shot we'll have a jack-rabbit lap on 'em all the way through."

His advice was not given a moment too soon, for hardly had the last word passed his lips when the commence-firing gong began ringing furiously.

Almost instantly he heard the familiar sound of the electric tray bounding up from the handling room with its load of ammunition. Every man, calm, deliberate, swift, was but a cog in that wonderful mechanism called a gun crew; and each man's part of the loading operation required but a second, or a fraction thereof. Snarky heard the electric rammer extend itself once, twice, three times, and then the ready light snapped on and with a downward thrust of his arm he elevated the great guns on the target. The trainer was already on the target, hovering near the edge of the bull's-eye, when the two short stand-by buzzers sounded.

The first tingle of the firing-buzzer was cut short almost instantly by a tremendous roar. Snarky's head was thrown back from the force of the concussion, and his eyes and nostrils were filled with fire from the hot blast of flame that filled the hood. Almost unconsciously he brought the great guns back to the loading position. As the smoke cleared, his eyes followed the big

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shells through the air as they described a long arc as their path of destruction, and then plowed their way through the target just below the bull's-eye. Just then another tremendous roar told him that the forward turret had fired its first salvo. He saw this salvo tear its way through the target near the top, and exulted that although both turrets had made direct hits, the after turret's salvo had torn its way much nearer the bull's-eye.

The second stand-by buzzers found Snarky's aim hovering just below the bull's-eye. At the first tingle of the firing-buzzer he elevated the big guns slightly but swiftly. The next instant there was another tremendous roar. The concussion was tremendous; he felt the back of his head hit against the bulkhead of the pointers' hood, and his hat leave his head as the hot blast of flame filled the hood. The smoke quickly cleared and again he followed the flight of the big shells with his eyes; and again he rejoiced as they tore through the target just above the bull's-eye. Another terrific roar, and he saw the salvo from the forward turret tear through the target just below their former hit. The forward turret was improving, but Snarky rejoiced in the knowledge that the after turret still led by a good margin.

The third and final stand-by buzzers found both pointers and the trainer of the after turret at the height of their hopes; they were not only holding their own against the forward turret's picked men—they were beating them. And with the opening tingle of the firing-buzzer the twin guns of the after turret belched forth their final argument.

Before the smoke had cleared Snarky was aware of a commotion below and back of him among the crew of his gun. He stooped down on his pointer's stand and turned just in time to see the plug swing open as the plugman spun the crank on the final rotation. Then he saw the excited gun-captain, his face a chalky hue, rush forward, brush the amazed plugman aside and begin closing the breech.

But after the first swift rotations of the crank the plug refused to go farther. Another glance at the tense faces of the half-naked members of the gun crew, and Snarky realized the situation. But there was no fear for him in the realization, and the terrible possibilities—they were drowned by the growing sense of defeat.

To Snarky a glance told the story all too plainly—and he understood the terror-stricken faces of his ship-mates. His gun had missed fire while the left gun had fired. The plugman, thinking from the roar of the left gun that both had fired, had foolishly opened the breech. Had he but paid strict attention to his duties this could not have happened, for he would have seen that his gun had not recoiled, but being unaware of this he had opened the breech and herein lay the terrible possibilities, for if the vast charge of powder hung fire it might explode at any moment killing every man in the turret.

The terrified gun-captain had rushed forward to close the breech, but in his excitement he had forgotten to push the half-extracted primer back into place, and it had jammed.

And while the gun-captain worked desperately and heroically; while the life of every man in the turret hung in the uncertain balance of chance, Snarky heard the roar of the forward turret's final salvo.

At the same time, to the intense relief of the gun crew, the gun-captain closed the breech, and snapped on the ready light. For a moment Snarky's hopes rose, but only for a moment, for before he could depress on the target the cease-firing gong was clanging.

SNARKY did not join in the hubbub and general confusion which followed. Unnoticed by his superior officer, he slipped through the turret hatch on to the quarterdeck. It was all over and he had no desire to stay and discuss what might have been, and anyway, now that the firing was over, he was wanted in the brig.

On the gun-deck he met the waiting master-at-arms, and a few minutes later he was again sitting on the steel deck of his cell, puffing warily at his last cigaret, and living over again the tense three minutes of firing. Three minutes! It had seemed three hours. And yet he realized that it was less than twenty minutes since he had been ordered to his firing-station by the master-at-arms.

During the next hour Snarky amused himself by pondering over the questions which continually rose in his mind and demanded to be answered. Those last salvos —what of them? Although the right gun had misfired, the left gun had fired. He

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wondered where that shot had hit the target—if at all. Neither had he watched the final salvo from the guns of the forward turret. Their second salvo, he mused, had improved on the first. Of course, their third salvo had struck the target then—but where? And why was that first division coxswain filling the vacancy of Wellady, the regular plugman? That fellow was the bird who had pulled the bone-head.

So absorbed was he in his meditation that he did not hear the footsteps outside his cell door. The turning of a key in his cell-door padlock startled him from his musings, and he jumped to his feet as the heavy door swung outward, and Mr. Farnell, a generous smile spread over his face, stepped in.

"Snark," he exclaimed as he came forward, his hand extended, "put 'er right there, boy. You've made a record."

Snarky smiled and took the officer's hand.

"Yes," he assented, "but a bum one."

"Nothing of the kind," Farnell assured him. "If it hadn't of been for the right gun misfiring our turret would have made a record that would have been the envy of the fleet. You know, the left gun's shell passed directly through the bull's-eye, and——"

"Through the bull's-eye?" the startled coxswain interrupted. "I didn't know. And the forward turret's last salvo, Mr. Farnell—the forward turret's last salvo?"

Mr. Farnell laughed gleefully.

"As clean a miss as you ever saw, Snark. Missed the whole blamed target. And that reminds me, Pete just finished collecting the bets—said you had a hundred and eighty up on the after turret and gave me this roll to hand to you—three hundred and sixty dollars.

"Nothin' to do with it but bank it in my sock," asserted Snarky, as he deposited it accordingly. "My furlough would have come in handy now," he added, candidly.

The lieutenant smiled knowingly.

"I was coming to that," he said. "Bill, the storekeeper, has managed to clear things up splendidly in your case. Bill said that he issued three new compasses in the last three months, yours being one of the three, and that when you drew yours from the store that he and you had marked it on the bottom. He found that the empty compass in your boat was not the one issued to you, so he got the boatswain and together they made a search and found your compass, full of alcohol, in that first division coxswain, Darber's, boat. They accused Darber and he admitted shifting compasses during a night watch—he's over in the next cell now.

"Mr. Farnell," interrupted Snarky, "ain't that the plugman that——"

"Of course," admitted Farnell, "neither of us knew anything about this when I asked Mr. Stone if he had an extra plugman that I could use in Wellady's place. He sent Darber. I thought he acted a little queer, but I didn't realize until after he had foolishly opened the plug after the misfire that he was hopelessly drunk. I just had an interview with the captain, and he ordered you back to duty at once, and said that your furlough would start tomorrow. Come on, let's hurry up on deck—it's almost time for torpedo defense."

Together, the commissioned officer and the enlisted man made their way to the top deck. When they reached the forecastle the officer turned abruptly to his companion.

"By the way, Snark," he said, "I almost forgot. The captain said it was too bad that you had been put in the brig for another man's offense, but I assured him it wasn't half bad in your case, for you had doubled your small change since yesterday. The old man seemed a little puzzled and asked how much money you had, so I showed him the roll I was holding for you and told him. Snark, the old man just twisted his mustache like he does when he hands out a court martial, and this is what he said:

" 'Mr. Farnell, three hundred and sixty dollars is too much money for an enlisted man to spend in a twenty-day furlough. Snarky doubled his money, eh? Well, I'll go him one better—I'll treble his furlough. Give him sixty days to spend it in, Farnell.' "

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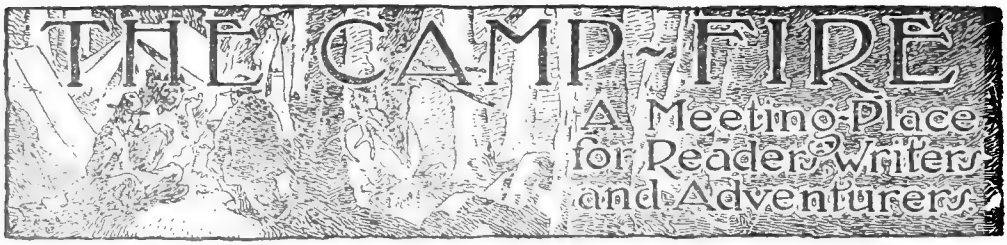

Our Camp-Fire came into being May 5, 1912, with our June issue, and since then its fire has never died down. Many have gathered about it and they are of all classes and degrees, high and low, rich and poor, adventurers and stay-at-homes, and from all parts of the earth. Some whose voices we used to know have taken the Long Trail and are heard no more, but they are still memories among us, and new voices are heard, and welcomed.

We are drawn together by a common liking for the strong, clean things of out-of-doors, for word from the earth's far places, for man in action instead of caged by circumstance. The *spirit* of adventure lives in all men; the rest is chance.

But something besides a common interest holds us together. Somehow a real comradeship has grown up among us. Men can not thus meet and talk together without growing into friendlier relations; many a time does one of us come to the rest for facts and guidance; many a close personal friendship has our Camp-Fire built up between two men who had never met; often has it proved an open sesame between strangers in a far land.

Perhaps our Camp-Fire is even a little more. Perhaps it is a bit of leaven working gently among those of different station toward the fuller and more human understanding and sympathy that will some day bring to man the real democracy and brotherhood he seeks. Few indeed are the agencies that bring together on a friendly footing so many and such great extremes as here. And we are numbered by the hundred thousand now.

If you are come to our Camp-Fire for the first time and find you like the things we like, join us and find yourself very welcome. There is no obligation except ordinary manliness, no forms or ceremonies, no dues, no officers, no anything except men and women gathered for interest and friendliness. Your desire to join makes you a member.

ONE day we in the office fell to wishing some one would do a "desert island" story about an island that wasn't a regular treasure-box of things useful for castaways; that the castaways wouldn't have a wrecked ship or well-stocked boat to draw from; that the castaways themselves wouldn't be marvels of knowledge and skill or specialists in anything that would be of great practical value on the island.

It began by our asking ourselves what kind of "desert island" story we'd like best for our own individual interest. We found that all five of us wanted the kind outlined above. The usual castaway story was all very well, but we'd read it in various versions a good many times, wanted something different, and, most of all, wanted to know what would happen to just ordinary fellows on a just ordinary island. The longer we wished, the less there was on that island and the less the castaways had and knew. We had quite an argument over whether one of them should be allowed a pocket-knife and another one a watch-crystal, but finally took both these things away.

Then we decided that a lot of you readers would feel very much as we did about this kind of story. Just like us. You'd read a lot of the usual kind and probably would be as glad as we to meet some castaways that were up against it from the start, with no soft snap in the way of equipment or resources either in themselves or in the island.

We also found that none of us wanted in that story any savages, volcanoes, fierce beasts, rival parties, love element, villains, buried treasures, women or any of the rest of the exciting things that usually enter into tales of this kind. Yes, but how could a writer get any action-plot into such a story? Where would the excitement come in? Finally we figured out that maybe there didn't need to be any of that kind of excitement. Here were five ordinary, every-day fellows who were unanimous in preferring

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to give up that kind of excitement in the story for the sake of getting the other things we wanted. Why wouldn't there be among you readers a whole lot of other every-day fellows who would feel the same way?

So we decided to try to get such a story and find out how many of you would feel as we did. But what writer would be willing to undertake such a story, with all a writer's best and easiest material and plot-elements taken away from him? We talked our idea over for weeks and became more and more enthusiastic—kept stopping work to talk it over yet another time. But the more we talked, the more we realized how almost impossible a task we'd be handing out to some poor author. We had all agreed that J. Allan Dunn was the man to do the story if only we could persuade him to risk putting a lot of time and work on a long story that seemed doomed to failure according to all the usual rules and regulations for magazine stories. And finally we put it up to him straight, admitting the risk and the difficulties in full. Naturally he saw them plain and hard enough without our telling him, and, not being a fool, he took time to think it over. He was interested from the first, but of course didn't want to undertake it unless he could feel resonably sure of making good. After gathering his resources he went to it. And he found it every bit as hard as any of us had figured, but his own interest carried him along; and if the story satisfies you as fully as it does us in the office, you'll have a very good time reading it.

It was part of the arrangement that you were to be told the circumstances in full. I also asked Mr. Dunn to state the case from his side, which he does in the following letter to you:

Pittsfield, Mass.

A. S. H. has asked me to write something of how I reacted to the plot of "Barehanded Castaways" which originated in *Adventure* office. "I'd like," he said, "to see a tale of Crusoes that would be different. Let the men be ordinary, every-day types, such a bunch of chaps as you might pick coming up from the subway. Let none of them be specialized in any craft that would be especially adapted for Crusoedom. Let there be no salvage from the wreck, no clothes to speak of, no knives, no watch-crystals to use as burning-glasses, no matches. Let the island not be one of those that extend a welcome at the very lip of the tide with convenient coconuts and self-sacrificing fish. Let them, with their every-day measures of knowledge, be up against the real thing from the start and work out their own salvation, if they can."

HE WENT on with other lets and hindrances. There were to be none of the ordinary adventitious aids to the adventure writer. No savages, no rescue, no volcanoes, no treasure. There was to be no attempt at a socialistic community. In fact he almost emptied out the entire box of tricks—as Jack London used to style it. He left me stranded and derelict on the keys of my typewriter.

"Moreover," said A. S. H., "in the ordinary Crusoe yarn there is always a wise man who recognizes everything that grows and crawls, swims, flies or walks and knows a thousand uses for them. Away with him!"

"Yes," I agreed, "and generally they have the fauna and flora of all the zones crammed into one little island seven by four." By this time I had got a measure of enthusiasm into me which was gradually leavening my system. "It isn't so blamed easy to get at a coconut," I demurred. "There's a heap of work, and many slips, between sight and suction. I'd like to see you get a nut from a tall, slender, straight-stemmed palm, and I'd thoroughly enjoy seeing you try to husk it without an ax."

"There will be no coconuts," said A. S. H. "No tropic climate and miniature Eden. No Eves. Take seven, eight or nine men. Wreck 'em. Let 'em hop to it. I'll allow you wild dogs and wild pigs for meat, excitement and leather."

Then the five of the editorial staff made up lists of what they knew that would be useful under such circumstances, what they thought they could do with their knowledge. I questioned a lot more every-day sort of chaps and I went to it.

It took me longer than any other story I have ever written. It was hard work but enjoyable. I realized how easy it is to write:

After infinite toil he succeeded in making a serviceable knife out of a sharp stone.

He made him a bow and arrows, practising assiduously until he was able to bring down a bird on the wing.

Working hard through the long, hot days, they hollowed out a log and made a navigable canoe.

And I knew how darned hard it is to *do* these things. Imagine yourself—you who are every-day, average chaps with average experience—turned loose in the deep woods without match or compass, knife or tobacco, with scanty clothes and no shoes. Figure how you'd make out if you were far away from all source of supplies and then multiply your troubles with a wreck, a boat voyage, lack of previous grub and water.

How to get nine average chaps ashore without a sailor, engineer, navigator or marine handyman was the first trick to turn. I knew the first forty-eight hours of their adventure would constitute the real struggle. That's where pluck and resource count. I felt sure that all the ordinary chaps I had tackled, to say nothing of the editorial five, had not set down all that they really did know. We have got a lot of encyclopedic knowledge packed away in our convolutions that the right chain of circumstances will dredge up. Necessity is the Mother of Invention and also the Spur of Memory. That's where we have it all over the savage. He is limited by his uncultivated Imagination, still in the Stone Age.

I HAD to put our Crusoes in the Stone Age. Metals of any sort are rare on such islands. Malleable metals, such a iron and copper, are non-existent. Unless I introduced a meteorite nicely

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blent of iron and nickel. But A. S. H. insisted on the plausibles and probables. The Polynesians, who were wonderful artificers, were Stone Age men.

So I wrecked 'em and I let them work out their plot—if it can be called a plot. I didn't try to skeletonize ahead, but tried to live with them.

It is possible to find in practically every brook two stones that will spark on contact. I've found them and made fire that way. Try it yourself some time. Ever try and open an oyster without a knife? Try to cut down a tree without an ax?

I FIGURED that A. S. H. had in mind to bring out the hard facts of existence that are sometimes glossed a bit in romantic fiction. If he had a moral, it was that we are overspecialized, too likely to rely upon the bookshelf.

Whether I have succeeded or not in writing a story that holds interest, I have tried to stick to the rules governing the suggestion. I am not pleading them as handicaps against success. To me it was interesting to realize how badly the lack of a cheap knife and especially of a saw held them back. And the psychology of it was also stimulating. I have written of things I have seen or done or heard of at first-hand. May the result find favor.—J. A. D.

So there you have it. As Mr. Dunn wrote me, the main trouble was not to fall into the easy fault of just saying the castaways did a thing; which sounds easy on paper but would not be at all easy for ordinary castaways to do in real life. And, as he put it, "to make 'em human." Throughout he has done his best to make this story *real*. As to action-plot, we believe there is nothing more exciting than an elemental, bare-handed struggle against nature for life itself, hour by hour and day by day, with no weapon except civilized man's brain and elemental man's courage, provided that struggle is made so real and true that an every-day human can feel it is what his own experience would be under like circumstances.

We think you will join us in thanking Mr. Dunn for having accomplished a very difficult thing—for coming under the wire a winner though carrying a heavier handicap than any other writer of a castaway island story has ever had loaded upon his shoulders. Are we right?

Incidentally, Mr. Dunn asks that it be stated that the translation of the "Æneid" is taken by consent from the hexameter edition of Harlan Hoge Ballard, Esq.

AT THIS writing there has not been time to hear from you in response to the latest suggestions concerning our Camp-Fire's proposed exploration expedition. The prospects are very bright indeed, and all are urged to send in their suggestions at the earliest moment so that plans can be shaped as closely as possible to the wishes and opinions of the majority.

After talking to several scientific explorers I'm glad to say that, if this kind of expedition is decided on, it will be entirely possible to draw on our own Camp-Fire comrades in selecting the personnel. It will certainly add greatly to our interest if some of our own are included, and it seems possible that all except the specialists in animals, reptiles, birds, plants, archeology, anthropology, etc., can be drawn from our ranks. For that matter, there are among us plenty of scientific experts in these lines. Let's hear from them.

BESIDES the scientific heads, there will probably be need of an expert photographer, a civil engineer or some one else able to make accurate maps, possibly a motion-picture man and of course a man or two thoroughly familiar with conditions in the general region selected as our field. Also, there must be some member of the expedition, preferably one of those qualifying in some other capacity, who can write for us the account of the party's experiences—the adventurous, human, amusing and exciting incidents, accompanied by concise, simple reports of scientific results gained.

Of course the final personnel will be determined by the nature, purpose, size, scene of operations and so forth ultimately decided upon for our expedition, but the above is at least a rough outline.

INCIDENTALLY, a scientific explorer connected with one of the best-known museums in the country has suggested three or more small expeditions, working together and burrowing into the jungle of the unknown part of Yucatan, starting from different sides, following different routes and meeting at some point in the interior. After comparing notes, all of the units could unite and work back for more thorough exploration of what seemed the most interesting things discovered by any of the units when working separately.

I asked this explorer to state his case in writing so that I could submit it to all of you and get your opinions.

I might mention that (with the exception of Arthur O. Friel, who will not be in town) the men whose names I suggested for a

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temporary executive committee are ready, if you approve such a committee and them as its members, to serve and do all they can to make our expedition a thorough success, an accomplishment which we can regard with pride as well as something that interests us and warms our sporting blood.

ON THE occasion of his first story in our magazine Bruce Johns, by Camp-Fire custom, rises and introduces himself:

Oakland, California.

In the time-honored custom of a neophyte about to enter the portals of the Camp-Fire, I take my pipe from my mouth and speak the following piece about myself:

BORN in the southern part of the Northwest, just below the border, my folks carried me in their arms into Canada just in time to see the Mounted while it was still serving a queen. It therefore happened that instead of obtaining my youthful thrills from the movies I got them from watching the red-coated law enforcers as they came and went in the town. Just to be allowed to watch them was enough to fill the caches of boyhood with all of the day-dream needed for future years of writing. Of course, there were also the stories I heard first-hand when I could sneak into the quarters or make a pest out of myself with some great-hearted soldier of the law during his idle moments. They were all big fellows then, but, as in the sad years which followed that of 1914, many of them soon left for the war (with the Boers) and did not return. Talking of thrills! The greatest one I ever got in those days was when one of the returning heroes, whom I knew by sight, stepped on my toe as he came from the train after winning the V. C. in South Africa.

We left the Northwest when I was still very young and I have spent all of my school-days in California. Went through San Francisco public schools and then graduated from the University of California. It has been a secret with my friends, but I will whisper that I graduated by grace of a patriotic board of regents because I had joined an ambulance company and left for France before final examinations.

AS FOR writing, I have always done it; in fact, I wrote my first at the age of five. However, by great fortune of the San Francisco fire and earthquake of 1906 this first one will never be in my biography, I am glad to state. I write as a habit, I suppose, but there is also another reason on the first and fifteenth of the month when the cashier of the newspaper on which I am a reporter shows his gratitude for my keeping the sheet the supreme news-shooter of the Pacific Coast.

We will now hear from the man on my right, who wears the flowing bow tie.—BRUCE JOHNS.

WHEN a boy visiting an uncle in Kansas, I remember with what awe I regarded the family across the road because one of them had been killed by the Benders, but I have to turn to the rest of you for any further information concerning them than is given in the following letter. I do recall vaguely, however, the story of several men on a hunting-trip from back home in Ohio who spent a night in the Bender house and emerged unharmed. For some reason I've forgotten, they were not attacked at table. They took their dogs up in their bedroom for the night, and probably owed their lives to doing so, for the dogs gave warning when a trap-door in the floor softly rose while the men slept. After several trap-door attempts the men took real alarm and spent the rest of the night guns in hand.

Pierce City, Missouri.

It may be that the adventurers have overlooked or perhaps forgotten the Kansas Benders. A family of cutthroats that infested the West in the early days, not far, I think, from Oswego. They ran a tavern, and when a guest with money arrived they placed him at a table with a painted curtain at his back, which so closely resembled the wall that it was not noticeable. Hidden behind this curtain they then gently tapped the occupied gentleman on the dome, and kicked loose a trap-door which let the body fall into the cellar.

The victims of these people were buried in the orchard at night. They were discovered by a brother tracing a brother.

You might mention this little item about the Benders to the boys at the Camp-Fire and see what they know.—J. PAUL MILLS.

WHEN Mr. Barretto got back to the office after his vacation and was telling me about his trip several features of it struck me forcibly, as they had him, so I asked him to tell the rest of you about it:

This isn't much of an adventure trip by comparison with some of the trips that other Camp-Fire comrades have taken; just a canoe jaunt of about three weeks, covering 300 miles.

WE, my pal and myself, paddled and sailed through Lake Champlain, then up the Richelieu River to Sorel, where it flows into the St. Lawrence, and then down the big stream to Quebec. For about twelve miles we went through the locks of the Chambly Canal, in order to avoid the rapids of the Richelieu River, but there were no portages during the entire trip.

Each night we camped wherever night found us, and often we were attracted to the friendly camp-fire of other travelers or they were attracted to ours.

Most of the campers were ex-soldiers who were justifying army life by roughing it on their own. We had long talks and silences while the blazing logs burned to red embers and then to white ash. Clean living must make for clean thinking since we heard almost no smut talked. The dirty story was conspicuous only by its absence. Rather there was a disposition to swap tales of army and camp life

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and to share bits of outdoor knowledge, gained through experience or hearsay.

One chap carried a list of Camp-Fire Stations with him and had visited those in his path, where he always found a warm welcome waiting. Whenever he was finished with the current issue of *Adventure* he would cache it away in some dry spot with any details about that particular locality which might be of interest to the next fellow—fresh water, good camping-places, etc. That is his idea of establishing silent little Camp-Fire Stations of his own, and I think it's a good one.

While it wasn't much of a trip, it gave us the experience and desire to take a bigger one next year. —L. B. BARRETTO.

The general good-fellowship of the out-of-doors, the fact that the open-air army life has made many of us discontented with city living, and, in a general way, the cleansing tendency of outdoor life—these were already familiar to us. Nevertheless the almost complete absence of smut is noteworthy, especially among men whom a certain part of our population would call "rough-necks" merely because they lived outdoors and had sense enough not to wear "dude" clothes when so living.

Note, too, this sample of the practical use of our Stations. Similar reports are coming in from others. I wish there were space for this comrade's account in detail of his good times at the Stations visited.

I'm particularly interested in the idea of little Camp-Fire "Stations" scattered at random along the road. Some of you have already told us of starting little *Adventure* "libraries" by tucking a magazine into some dry spot where it could catch the eye of the next comrade happening along the way. Here is a new stunt along this line—writing on the magazine some practical pointers as to the locality, route, etc. It's good comradeship, these little "libraries," caches, or "stations" without a keeper. Why not make it a regular practise among us? Why not pass on, not only our own magazine, but any other magazine—anything else that might prove welcome to other comrades? Write on it our number 71, and the next man will know why it was left and what spirit prompted it—that a Camp-Fire comrade he perhaps never saw is holding out a friendly hand to him. Also that he's to leave it for the man after him. The "71" outside the cache would serve as sign and notice. Add your name, date and message if you like, on the magazine, and pretty soon the "register" will be sort of interesting to look at.

Mr. Barretto says that when some of the men he met found out he was connected with our magazine they made him tell them how the serials were going to turn out.

FOLLOWING Camp-Fire custom, A. K. Baird rises and introduces himself on the occasion of his first story in our magazine:

Snohomish, Washington.

The Camp-Fire: I am requested to stand up and introduce myself before the Camp-Fire as a "human being." On the face of it the request seems simple enough, for as I understand it we are all classed as human beings and therefore we all should have a more or less intimate knowledge of what may be expected from one; thus making an introduction of this kind a very simple duty to perform. However, now that I am attempting it, I find it not the easiest thing in the world to do. To be perfectly frank, I havn't the slightest idea what to say. In the vernacular of the 'possum country I'm "up a tree."

MY AUTOBIOGRAPHY, were it ever written and published, would, I fear, be so dry it would raise a dust as the disappointed reader turned the pages. And as for interesting high-lights upon the drab surface of my past experience—they are conspicuous by their absence.

On the one hand, I may truthfully state that to date I have never been held up and robbed (that is, at the point of a gun—we won't speak of railroads, hotels, restaurants, etc., at this time) nor have I been washed overboard from a foundering ship at sea, captured by cannibals or married. Neither have I, during the comparatively short time I have been answering roll-call upon the face of our fair planet, found a gold-mine, shot a man, run for president or captured a woolly rhinoceros.

On the other hand, I can as truthfully admit that I have gone to school a little, worked some and traveled a bit.

AS FOR adventures, in the true sense of the word, I fear I have never had any. True, I've had a few experiences that at the time were very, very interesting to me in a personal way; but when looking back upon them I find that in the majority of cases that element of suspense and threat of personal danger that is part and parcel of every 100 per cent. adventure was largely a figment of my own imagination—a fact that on the face of it disqualifies each incident as a real adventure.

It has been my good fortune, however, to see quite a little of our own wonderful country, besides enjoying a "sailor's eye-view" of western and southern Europe and the northern shore-line of Africa.

It has also been my further good fortune to sit for hours at a time listening to wonderful tales of far-away islands in the South Pacific—tales told by those who have spent years among the scenes they so vividly describe and which hold, for me at least, a charm of never-waning interest.

And now you have it all. There really remains nothing further for me to tell. Your friendly greeting and hospitable invitation to join you around the cheery blaze of the Camp-Fire has meant much to

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me. I thank you for it and hereby willingly and gladly accept.—A. K. BAIRD.

AMONG us there are lots more like him, along with staid professors, business men, physicians, ministers and all other kinds except lady-men. And all good comrades together. At a rough guess I'd say our Camp-Fire is the most cosmopolitan and democratic body in the world.

Satsop, Washington.

To the pals of the Camp-Fire: I am a poor writer, so there fore can not make a much of a story out of this. I have had a number of adventures in my life. Have roamed the world over; I have had $$$ by the thousand and have been hungry; many times I have served my little time in the Army, and got my share of the wounds. But I must have been born on the move, as I am unable to stop. Ninety days is my limit in any town or place. I beg, borrow and sometimes buy *Adventure* wherever I go; I miss a few copies at different times but not often. Some fellers say that they like to live in fine hotels; that's all right for those that like it; but, pals, for my part give me a bit of salt pork, sizzled over a camp-fire with an ash biscuit or two and a few beans and I am happy as a king or perhaps more so. I am going to be here for a little while yet and sure would like a Camp-Fire button. Up to a few days ago I did not know that any one outside of my road pals would be interested in my rambles, or care to know why I got so many scars on my body. (Say, I am making some mistakes as I am new at this kind of a buzz-wagon to wride on—what I mean is write on.) I meet many kinds of men. Some are queer birds, some are real he-men. I am preparing to go on a prospecting-trip now up in the State of Idaho, and while I know lots of men in the West I must say that from the looks of things I'm going to have to take this trip alone, and when I get back I may have something of interest for you boys. If anybody wants to get any information about the road of life as I have traveled, send an addressed envelope and I'll try to tell you what you want to know. You can send 'em to this town, as my mother takes care of my mail till I return or send for it. When I come back from my mine trip will try to write some stories of my rambles over the world. Hoping this will be printed, I am, ever a roaming Pal.—LOUIS R. ROVNY.

FOLLOWING Camp-Fire custom, Lloyd A. Kohler rises and introduces himself on the occasion of his first story in our magazine.

Since he asks, on that night I was out along with everybody else. Along Broadway near Forty-second some great big fellow with a grin on his face reached over across a few others on the sidewalk, brought down a heavy hand on my shoulder so hard it bruised the soles of my feet, and yelled at me above the din, I'll bet *you're* glad!" I was, but just why he should be interested in my particular case I've never been able to figure out. New York was chuck full of glad people that night, and I don't believe my grin was any bigger than his own for example. Maybe he was just saying that to everybody there was time for. But for a while I wished he'd "said it with flowers" instead of with that friendly but hefty right hand of his. Lucky he didn't pick me out for a pro-German.

Junction City, Kansas.

Would I write a few lines for Camp-Fire? Would I accept a thousand dollars, a Marmon car, or a Curtiss biplane? My dear fellows of Camp-Fire, there are myriad things that I would like to have the chance of doing, and writing a few lines to you fellows (and the women of our creed) is one of them. I can assure you that I would have done this long ago had I thought that I deserved the chance. I want to ask you fellows, just for this once anyway, to try to put up with me—like the gobs do with the marines. And from now on, if you *must* "ride an editor," try to pass courteously by *Adventure's;* he'll be having his hands full trying to keep me hushed up from now on, beside his other duties.

AS TO real adventure, although I come from the country of "Wild Bill" Heakok—not Hickok—and the first stamping-grounds of the James and Younger boys, that was all before I started prospectin', and as to the little incidents in my own life I don't pretend that they are models of adventure. But in justice to myself I (I—I—I—bet you could string me up already and riddle me with lead for that eternal pronoun)—but as I was saying I didn't spend all my days—and nights—in this Wild West of wheat-fields and tin lizzies. Some of it I have spent at sea; the Atlantic, the Pacific, and those smaller water-holes like the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico. And I think I'll even mention the Great Lakes—they're not so big but a few men have drowned in them.

Among other things I've rested my bones on a bench in Riverside Park, in your little city on the east coast, and relaxed my muscles on the grass in Golden Gate Park, by the opposite shore. Also I've seen most of the country from Windsor, in Ontario, to Juarez, in Pancho's stamping-grounds. Also a little of both Canada and Mexico. That about covers our country both ways, and I have covered it in other directions; but this is mere incident, for there are those among us who have very nearly crossed the world in both directions, and would have done so—perhaps—if the Poles were more accessible.

IT WAS my good fortune to be with our Atlantic fleet when our last war was declared, and perhaps better fortune to find myself still on top of the briny and not under it when the curtain came down. I was a deck-sailor, if I may coin my own phrase, and did a little of it all; holy-stone to acey-deucey—that is, apprentice-seaman to boatswain's mate. I'll always claim that that little war was *some* drama; and then, as if to frost the cake nicely, it just happened that my packet dropped the mud-hook off the Ninety-sixth Street landing in the

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North River a few hours before they started ringing the bells, and the big liners, the tramps, the tugs, and the ferries attempted to do the thing that Gabriel's trumpet alone can do. Wonder how many of the members of our little circle, Camp-Fire, were in little old New York that night. (Wonder what *Adventure's* editor was doing.) I recall very vividly among other things that all the bars were securely padlocked by 8 or 9 P.M.—remember? But wait! The war is over and that nightmare of July 1st was years ago; it's no intention of mine to be the cause of a lot of you fellows spending your dimes and quarters for grape-juice.

JUST one word more and then I'll shut my jib, unroll my corkin' mat and bid you all a hearty good night—may the angels be with you when I awake and hail you again. At least you may be prepared for the worst.

This is to the disciples of Izaak Walton—it's a fish story that ain't even fishy. There's a paradox for you! Last week I landed a five-pound carp. Now before somebody gets all excited I'm going to admit that men have captured larger fish; in fact, I've seen the whalers return to port myself. But here's the point; although, of course, I didn't count 'em, I'd be willing to swear that my carp had more bones than Mr. Van Camp has beans. I want the editor to put me on record as the "Guy who landed the Keeper of the Fishy Boneyard." Some wise bird will of course rise to the occasion with the assertion that he has landed a fish that would make my ex-pet look like a jelly-fish, as far as bones go. Nevertheless I have entered the lists, my hat is in the ring, and I expect to accept any challenge.—LLOYD KOHLER.

HIS series of story-articles on the old West have brought Frederick Bechdolt so many responses and so much information from old-timers that he wants me to express his sincere thanks at Camp-Fire. It is also a tribute to his conscientious, painstaking work that his articles have so well stood the severest of tests—the scrutiny of the men who knew the old times at first hand.

One of the pleasantest features of these stories has been the genuine deep interest that a number of old-timers have shown in them and the information they have written me. I would be grateful if you would say a word for me to that effect in Camp-Fire, thanking them not only for their data but for much good honest criticism.—FREDERICK BECHDOLT.

THOUGH belated, through no fault of his own, his first story in our magazine having already appeared, George Gilbert follows our Camp-Fire custom and introduces himself:

Binghamton, New York.

Born in Binghamton, N. Y., in 1874 and have called it my home always, although I've often been away from it—far away at times. Have been newsie, messenger-boy, freak kid telegrapher at fourteen, Phillips code telegrapher at sixteen and a "rambler" of the Morse fraternity. Have been lineman, scouted in the big timbers for pole-timber, cut them, trimmed them, delivered them to construction jobs; had charge of a complete turnpike section for the Postal before I was nineteen, rambled again and yet again. Became Associated Press steady man at Binghamton, then editorial writer for important inland dailies (five of 'em) also managing editor, part owner of two. Was, in between, a majority clerk assigned to serve Republican Whip John W. Dwight during the Payne-Aldrich tariff session and the insurgent session of the Congress. Have been writing for magazines since 1901. My first Western tale appeared in *The Open Road*, of Detroit, in 1902. Like to write Western tales because I've known so many Western folks with good stories in them.—GEORGE GILBERT.

A LETTER from one of our writers' brigade with a tip for any adventurer wanting a bit of excitement and money out of cougar-hunting:

Seattle, Washington.

Thought the Camp-Fire boys might be interested in this opportunity for a little adventure with a kick in it, so am passing on this newspaper story. The offer is on the square, I believe, as the story was handled by the Canadian Associated Press and came from an authoritative source. Anyway Vancouver Island for years has been noted as the haunt of cougars, and they are reported to have multiplied so rapidly of late as to amount almost to a plague.

A FEW weeks ago the British Columbia provincial government engaged a man from Washington State to hunt them down, a man who is credited with having killed some 300 cougars. His name I've forgotten, but apparently there is still room for cougar-hunters up there. Here's the story:

> "VICTORIA, B. C.—One hundred a month salary for cougar-hunters and the bounty of $40 and $55 for each animal killed, which, if one cougar a day is bagged, will bring the hunter in $2,000 a month, is the inducement being offered by the British Columbia Game-Conservation Board to big-game hunters on Vancouver Island. In addition the hunter will own the cougar pelts, which are worth $10 or $12.
>
> A determined attempt is being made to rid the island of the destructive cougar. In sheep districts the bounty is $55 and in non-sheep districts $40 is paid.
>
> " 'There is practically no limit to the money a man may make on this job,' said an official today."

I wouldn't advise any one to tackle the proposition without first writing the British Columbia Game-Conservation Board, Victoria, B. C., for further information as to the nature of the country, probable distance from base of supplies, equipment needed, etc.

If they grow as big on Vancouver Island as they do in the Cascades here, I dare say a person can get a thrill out of such sport. One killed near here last

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Spring weighed close to 200 pounds, and was nearly nine feet from tip to tip.—KENNETH GILBERT.

BY CAMP-FIRE custom Frederic P. Ladd rises and introduces himself on the occasion of his first story in our magazine:

Providence, Rhode Island.

I doubt if there is much to be said about "The Strangest Man in Harr," but I thank you just the same for your cordial welcome to the *Adventure* Family. It looks like a numerous and interesting family to me.

Every one of us is proud of the stuff that makes men like *George Slemp*. We find such men, sometimes—too big to be small, and infinitely glorious if contrasted with little souls. Here's to the Family.—FREDERIC P. LADD.

WE HAVE received some letters of complaint concerning the Order of the Restless, whose address we have been giving in each issue of the "Service Page." As explained on that page, *Adventure* has no connection with the Order of the Restless beyond its friendly interest and is in no way responsible for it—no more than it is responsible for the National Rifle Association of America, whose address we also publish. We have published both addresses for a long time, and if there has been any complaint previous to the last few weeks it has not been of a nature to warrant serious consideration or to remain in the memory. There has seemed no reason to question either organization.

Nevertheless these recent letters of complaint concerning the O. of R. merit attention. I found them on return from my vacation and at once wrote Mr. Eberly for his side of the case. Mr. Noyes had already written him.

PENDING a full and fair hearing of the case, we omitted the usual notice from the last issue, the earliest one that had not gone too far in the process of manufacture to be changed, and shall continue to omit it until this matter is cleared up. The omission carries with it no impeachment of the O. of R. or of Mr. Eberly. We are under no obligation to run any such notice, can discontinue it at any time, and are doing so now only because we do not wish this magazine to give publicity to anything causing dissatisfaction to any of our readers. Later, if the causes of dissatisfaction prove unsound or due merely to the accidents and misunderstandings attendant upon any such movement, we shall feel free to publish the item again.

I have asked Mr. Eberly to state his case, and I ask any members of the O. of R. to send me, in the interests of all, any testimony in either direction that they deem pertinent.

Here is Mr. Eberly's letter:

Cleveland, Ohio.

I regret very much my failure to answer Mr. Noyes' letter, as I have been very busy, and regret that anything should bring your magazine into any controversy of this kind.

I DO not recall any letter from any one asking for button that did not receive one, but have had several write they did not receive any and immediately ordered another one sent.

I have been at this address since January 1st of this year and wrote change of address then and once since, but can not understand how any one could not have found some one there who might have told them of the move and that the bank itself took over the space.

Several boys have dropped in here and sent cards ahead, but they managed to find me from Camp-Fire address in *Adventure's* Station list.

The boys mainly are very careless, and over 50 per cent. of my replies to inquiries are returned unclaimed.

I have tried always to make clear the fact this is a mutual affair and that the money paid is for postage and printing and not for me for any personal expense, and if it is found impossible to put this Order over they will only be out a small amount of money in helping to establish a good idea.

AS FAR as promotion goes on my part I have already spent over $100 more than received and never figured to draw one cent for any service, nor have I any desire to appear as the one man of the Order, but would insist, if organized, that some one else be elected.

I regret this very much, and hope every one will write to me his side of the case and I will try and show him how things stand here.

Enclosed is copy of records here, and how slow a process it is to get anywhere, as the boys are careless and mainly never write in any more.

This is a hobby of mine and that is all, and I hoped to see a real Order in existence long before this.

Will gladly answer any questions, or send all records to you.—WAYNE EBERLY, 602 National City Building.

No letters from Mr. Eberly calling for change of address are in our regular files. It is, however, possible that such letters were received and held out of the regular files, for some such purpose as use in Camp-Fire, without requested change being made. Their not being now in evidence is as likely to be due to a mistake on our part as to mistaken memory on Mr. Eberly's part.—A. S. H.

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VARIOUS PRACTICAL SERVICES FREE TO ANY READER

These services of *Adventure* are free to any one. They involve much time, work and expense on our part, but we offer them gladly and ask in return only that you **read and observe the simple rules,** thus saving needless delay and trouble for us. The whole spirit of the magazine is one of friendliness. No formality between editors and readers. Whenever we can help we're ready and willing to try. **Remember: Magazines are made up ahead of time. Allow for two or three months between sending and publication.**

Identification Cards

Free to any reader. Just send us (1) your name and address, (2) name and address of party to be notified, (3) a stamped and self-addressed return envelope.

Each card bears this inscription, each printed in English, French, Spanish, German, Portuguese, Dutch, Italian, Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Japanese:

"In case of death or serious emergency to bearer, address serial number of this card, care of *Adventure*, New York, stating full particulars, and friends will be notified."

In our office, under each serial number, will be registered the name of bearer and of one or two friends, with permanent address of each. No name appears on the card. Letters will be forwarded to friend, unopened by us. Names and addresses treated as confidential. We assume no other obligations. Cards not for business identification. Cards furnished free *provided stamped and addressed envelope accompanies application.* We reserve the right to use our own discretion in all matters pertaining to these cards.

Metal Cards—For twenty-five cents we will send you, *post-paid*, the same card in aluminum composition, perforated at each end. Enclose a self-addressed return envelope, but no postage. Twenty-five cents covers everything. Give same data as for pasteboard cards. Holders of pasteboard cards can be registered under both pasteboard and metal cards if desired, but old numbers can not be duplicated on metal cards. If you no longer wish your old card, destroy it carefully and notify us, to avoid confusion and possible false alarms to your friends registered under that card.

A moment's thought will show the value of this system of card-identification for any one, whether in civilization or out of it. Remember to furnish stamped and addressed envelope and to *give in full the names and addresses of self and friend or friends when applying.*

If check or money order is sent, please make it out to the Ridgway Company, *not* to any individual.

Mail Address and Forwarding Service

This office, assuming no responsibility, will be glad to act as a forwarding address for its readers or to hold mail till called for, provided necessary postage is supplied. Unclaimed mail which we have held for a long period is listed on the last page of the last issue of each month.

Missing Friends or Relatives

Our free service department "Lost Trails" in the pages following, though frequently used in cases where detective agencies, newspapers, and all other methods have failed, or for finding people long since dead, has located a very high percentage of those inquired for. Except in case of relatives, inquiries from one sex to the other are barred.

Back Issues of *Adventure*

The Boston Magazine Exchange, 109 *Mountfort St., Boston, Mass., can supply* Adventure *back through* 1918, *and occasional copies before that.*

WILL SELL: 1910, 1920, 1921 and most of 1918, at five cents each, postpaid.—Address FRED C. WILKINS, 24 Cherry St., Danvers, Mass.

WILL SELL: Jan., 1913, 1914, 1916, 1917; Feb., 1913, 1915, 1919; March, 1914, 1916; April, 1914, 1916; May, 1913, 1916; June, 1916; July, 1913, 1915; Aug., 1912; Sept., 1912, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917; Oct., 1912, 1913, 1916, 1917; Nov., 1912 to 1917; Dec., 1912 to 1917. All in good condition.—Address C. C. CHANDLER, 933 Eastwood Ave., Chicago, Ill.

Manuscripts

Glad to look at any manuscript. We have no "regular staff" of writers. A welcome for new writers. *It is not necessary to write asking to submit your work.*

When submitting a manuscript, if you write a letter concerning it, enclose it *with* the manuscript; do *not* send it under separate cover. Enclose stamped and addressed envelope for return. All manuscripts should be typewritten double-spaced, with wide margins, not rolled, name and address on first page. We assume no risk for manuscripts or illustrations submitted, but use all due care while they are in our hands. Payment on acceptance.

We want only clean stories. Sex, morbid, "problem," psychological and supernatural stories barred. Use almost no fact-articles. Can not furnish or suggest collaborators. Use fiction of almost any length; under 3000 welcomed.

Camp-Fire Stations

In their homes or shops some members of Camp-Fire—any one belongs who wishes to—maintain Stations where wanderers may call and receive such hospitality as the Keeper wishes to offer. The only requirements are that the Station display the regular sign, provide a box for mail to be called for and keep the regular register book. Otherwise Keepers run their Stations to suit themselves and are not responsible to this magazine or representative of it. List of Stations and further details are published in the Camp-Fire in the first issue of each month.

Camp-Fire Buttons

To be worn on lapel of coat by members of Camp-Fire—any one belongs who wishes to. Enameled in dark colors representing earth, sea and sky, and bears the numeral 71—the sum of the letters of the word Camp-Fire valued according to position in the alphabet. Very small and inconspicuous. Designed to indicate the common interest which is the only requisite for membership in Camp-Fire and to enable members to recognize each other when they meet in far places or at home. Twenty-five cents, post-paid, anywhere.

When sending for the button enclose a strong, self-addressed, *un*stamped envelope.

If check or money order is sent, please make it out to the Ridgway Company, *not* to any individual.

General Questions from Readers

In addition to our free service department "Ask Adventure" on the pages following, *Adventure* can sometimes answer other questions within our general field. When it can, it will. Expeditions and employment excepted.

Expeditions and Employment

While we should like to be of aid in these matters, experience has shown that it is not practicable.

Addresses

Camp-Fire—Any one belongs who wishes to.

Rifle Clubs—Address Nat. Rifle Ass'n of America, 1108 Woodward Bldg., Washington, D. C.

(*See also under "Standing Information" in "Ask Adventure."*)

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Ask Adventure

A Free Question and Answer Service Bureau of Information on Outdoor Life and Activities Everywhere and Upon the Various Commodities Required Therein. Conducted for *Adventure* Magazine by Our Staff of Experts.

QUESTIONS should be sent, not to this office, but direct to the expert in charge of the section in whose field it falls. So that service may be as prompt as possible, he will answer you by mail direct. But he will also send to us a copy of each question and answer, and from these we shall select those of most general interest and publish them each issue in this department, thus making it itself an exceedingly valuable standing source of practical information. Unless otherwise requested, inquirer's name and town are printed with question; street numbers not given.

When you ask for *general* information on a given district or subject the expert may give you some valuable general pointers and refer you to books or to local or special sources of information.

Our experts will in all cases answer to the best of their ability, using their own discretion in all matters pertaining to their sections subject only to our general rules for "Ask Adventure," but neither they nor the magazine assumes any responsibility beyond the moral one of trying to do the best that is possible. These experts have been chosen by us not only for their knowledge and experience but with an eye to their integrity and reliability. We have emphatically assured each of them that his advice or information is not to be affected in any way by whether a given commodity is or is not advertised in this magazine.

1. **Service free to anybody, provided stamped and addressed envelop is enclosed. Correspondents writing to or from foreign countries will please enclose International Reply Coupons, purchasable at any post-office, and exchangeable for stamps of any country in the International Postal Union.**
2. **Send each question direct to the expert in charge of the particular section whose field covers it. He will reply by mail. Do NOT send questions to this magazine.**
3. **No reply will be made to requests for partners, for financial backing, or for chances to join expeditions. "Ask Adventure" covers business and work opportunities, but only if they are outdoor activities, and only in the way of general data and advice. It is in no sense an employment bureau.**
4. **Make your questions definite and specific. State exactly your wants, qualifications and intentions. Explain your case sufficiently to guide the expert you question.**
5. **Send no question until you have read very carefully the exact ground covered by the particular expert in whose section it seems to belong.**

1. The Sea Part 1
BERIAH BROWN, 1508 Columbia St., Olympia, Wash. Ships, seamen and shipping; nautical history; seamanship, navigation, yachting, small-boat sailing; commercial fisheries of North America; marine bibliography of U. S.; fishing-vessels of the North Atlantic and Pacific banks. (*See next section.*)

2. ★ The Sea Part 2
CAPTAIN A. E. DINGLE, Hamilton, Bermuda. Questions on the sea, ships and men local to the British Empire go to Captain Dingle, not Mr. Brown. (*Postage 5 cents.*)

3. ★ Islands and Coasts
CAPTAIN A. E. DINGLE, Hamilton, Bermuda. Islands of Indian and Atlantic oceans; the Mediterranean; Cape Horn and Magellan Straits. Ports, trade, peoples, travel. (*Postage 5 cents.*)

4. ★ New Zealand; and the South Sea Islands Part 1
TOM L. MILLS, *The Feilding Star*, Feilding, New Zealand. New Zealand, Cook Islands, Samoa. Travel, history, customs; adventure, exploring, sport. (*Postage 8 cents.*)

5. South Sea Islands Part 2
CHARLES BROWN, JR., 213 E St., San Rafael, Calif. French Oceania (Tahiti, the Society, Paumoto, Marquesas); Islands of Western Pacific (Solomons, New Hebrides, Fiji, Tonga); of Central Pacific (Guam, Ladrone, Pelew, Caroline, Marshall, Gilbert, Ellice); of the Detached (Wallis, Penrhyn, Danger, Easter, Rotuma, Futuna, Pitcairn). Natives, history, travel, sports, equipment, climate, living conditions, commerce, pearling, vanilla and coconut culture.

6. ★ Australia and Tasmania
ALBERT GOLDIE, Sydney Press Club, 51 Elizabeth St., Sydney, Australia. Customs, resources, travel, hunting, sports, history. (*Postage 5 cents.*)

7. Malaysia, Sumatra and Java
FAY-COOPER COLE, Ph. D., Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, Ill. Hunting and fishing, exploring, commerce, natives, history, institutions.

8. New Guinea
DR. ALBERT BUELL LEWIS, Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, Ill. Hunting and fishing, exploring, commerce, natives, history, institutions.

9. Philippine Islands
BUCK CONNOR, 5444 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, Calif. History, natives, topography, customs, travel, hunting, fishing, minerals, agriculture, commerce.

10. Hawaiian Islands and China
F. J. HALTON, 103 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago, Ill. Customs, travel, natural history, resources, agriculture, fishing, hunting.

11. Japan
GRACE P. T. KNUDSON, Castine, Me. Commerce, politics, people, customs, history, geography, travel, agriculture, art, curios.

12. Asia, Southern
CAPTAIN BEVERLEY GIDDINGS, 1315 Josephine Street, New Orleans, La. Arabia, Persia, India, Tibet, Burma, western China, Borneo. Hunting, exploring, traveling, customs.

13. Russia and Eastern Siberia
MAJOR A. M. LOCHWITZKY (formerly Lieut.-Col. I. R. A., Ret.), care *Adventure*. Petrograd and its province, Finland, northern Caucasus, Primorsk district, island of Sakhalien. Travel, hunting, fishing; explorations among native tribes; markets, trade, curios.

14. Africa Part 1
THOMAS S. MILLER, Carmel, Monterey Co., Calif. Gold, Ivory and Fever Coasts of West Africa, Niger River to Jebba, northern Nigeria. Canoeing, labor, trails, trade, expenses, outfitting, flora, tribal histories, witchcraft.

15. ★ Africa Part 2 Transvaal, N. W. and Southern Rhodesia, British East, Uganda and the Upper Congo
CHARLES BEADLE, Ile de Lerne, par Vannes, Morbihan,

★ *(Enclose addressed envelop with 5 cents—in Mr. Beadle's case 12 cents—in stamps NOT attached)*

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Brittany, France. Geography, hunting, equipment, trading, climate, transport, customs, living conditions, witchcraft, adventure and sport. (*Postage 12 cents.*)

16. Africa Part 3 Cape Colony, Orange River Colony, Natal and Zululand
CAPTAIN F. J. FRANKLIN, care Adventurers' Club of Chicago, 40 So. Clark St., Chicago, Ill. Climate, shooting and fishing, imports and exports; health resorts, minerals, direct shipping routes from U. S., living conditions, travel, opportunities for employment. Free booklets on: Orange-growing, apple-growing, sugar-growing, maize-growing; viticulture; sheep and fruit ranching.

17. ✠ Africa Part 4 Portuguese East
R. G. WAKING, Corunna, Ontario, Canada. Trade, produce, climate, opportunities, game, wild life, travel, expenses, outfits, health, etc. (*Postage 3 cents.*)

18. Africa Part 5 Morocco
GEORGE E. HOLT, Frederick, Md. Travel, tribes, customs, history, topography, trade.

19. Africa Part 6 Tripoli
CAPTAIN BEVERLEY GIDDINGS, 1315 Josephine Street, New Orleans, La. Including the Sahara Tuaregs and caravan routes. Traveling, exploring, customs, caravan trade.

20. Africa Part 7 Egypt and Barbary States
J. L. BINDA, National Foreign Trade Council, 1 Hanover Sq., New York. Egypt and Sudan, Tunis, Algeria. Travel, history, ancient and modern: monuments, languages, races, customs, commerce.

21. Turkey and Asia Minor
J. L. BINDA, National Foreign Trade Council, 1 Hanover Sq., New York. Travel, history, geography, races, languages, customs, trade opportunities.

22. Balkans
J. L. BINDA, National Foreign Trade Council, 1 Hanover Sq., New York. Greece, Albania, Jugo-Slavia, Bulgaria, Rumania. Travel, history, topography, language, customs, trade opportunities.

23. South America. Part 1
EDGAR YOUNG, care *Adventure*. Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Chile. Geography, inhabitants, history, industries, topography, minerals, game, languages, customs.

24. South America. Part 2
P. H. GOLDSMITH, *Inter-American Magazine*, 407 West 117th St., New York, N. Y. Venezuela, the Guianas, Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay and Argentine Republic. Travel, history, customs, industries, topography, natives, languages, hunting and fishing.

25. Central America
EDGAR YOUNG, care *Adventure*. Canal Zone, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, British Honduras, Salvador, Guatemala. Travel, languages, game, conditions, minerals, trading.

26. Mexico Part 1 Northern
J. W. WHITEAKER, 1505 W. 10th St., Austin, Tex. Border States of old Mexico—Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas. Minerals, lumbering, agriculture, travel, customs, topography, climate, natives, hunting, history, industries.

27. Mexico Part 2 Southern; and Lower California
C. R. MAHAFFEY, Topolobampo, Sinaloa, Mexico. Lower California; Mexico south of [a line from Tampico to Mazatlan. Mining, agriculture, topography, travel, hunting, lumbering, history, natives, business and general conditions.

28. ✠ North American Snow Countries Part 1
S. E. SANGSTER ("Canuck"), L. B. 393, Ottawa, Canada. Height of Land and northern Quebec and Ontario (except strip between Minn. and C. P. Ry.); southeastern Ungava and Keewatin. Sport, canoe routes, big game, fish, fur; equipment; Indian life and habits; Hudson's Bay Co. posts; minerals, timber; customs regulations. No questions answered on trapping for profit. (*Postage 3 cents.*)

29. ✠ North American Snow Countries Part 2
HARRY M. MOORE, Deseronto, Ont., Canada. Ottawa Valley and southeastern Ontario. Fishing, hunting, canoeing, mining, lumbering, agriculture, topography, travel, camping, aviation. (*Postage 3 cents.*)

30. ✠ North American Snow Countries Part 3
GEORGE L. CATTON, Tweed, Ont., Canada. Georgian Bay and southern Ontario. Fishing, hunting, trapping, canoeing. (*Postage 3 cents.*)

31. North American Snow Countries Part 4
T. F. PHILLIPS, Department of Science, Duluth Central High School, Duluth, Minn. Hunters Island and English River district. Fishing, camping, hunting, trapping, canoeing, climate, topography, travel.

32. North American Snow Countries Part 5
ED. L. CARSON, La Connor, Wash. Yukon, British Columbia and Alberta including Peace River district; to Great Slave Lake. Outfits and equipment, guides, big game, minerals, forest, prairie; travel; customs regulations.

33. ✠ North American Snow Countries. Part 6
REECE H. HAGUE, The Pas, Manitoba, Canada. Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Mackenzie and northern Keewatin. Homesteading, mining, hunting, trapping, lumbering and travel. (*Postage 3 cents.*)

34. ✠ North American Snow Countries Part 7
JAS. F. B. BELFORD, Codrington, Ont., Canada. New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and southeastern Quebec. Hunting, fishing, lumbering, camping, trapping, auto and canoe trips, history, topography, farming, homesteading, mining, paper industry, water-power. (*Postage 3 cents.*)

35. North American Snow Countries Part 8
THEODORE S. SOLOMONS, 2837 Fulton St., Berkeley, Calif. Alaska. Arctic life and travel; boats, packing, backpacking, traction, transport, routes; equipment, clothing, food; physics, hygiene; mountain work.

36. Western U. S. Part 1
E. E. HARRIMAN, 2303 W. 23rd St., Los Angeles, Calif. California, Oregon, Washington, Utah, Nevada, Arizona. Game, fur, fish; camp, cabin; mines, minerals; mountains.

37. Western U. S. Part 2
J. W. WHITEAKER, 1505 W. 10th St., Austin, Tex. Texas and Oklahoma. Minerals, agriculture, travel, topography, climate, hunting, history, industries.

38. Middle Western U. S. Part 1
JOSEPH MILLS HANSON (lately Capt. A. E. F.), care *Adventure*. The Dakotas, Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas. Hunting, fishing, travel. Especially early history of Missouri Valley.

39. Middle Western U. S. Part 2
JOHN B. THOMPSON, 906 Pontiac Bldg., Chicago, Ill. Missouri, Arkansas and the Missouri Valley up to Sioux City, Iowa. Wilder countries of the Ozarks, and swamps; hunting, fishing, trapping, farming, mining and range lands; big-timber sections.

40. Middle Western U. S. Part 3
(Expert to be appointed). Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Lake Michigan. Fishing, hunting, trapping, lumbering, canoeing, camping, guides, outfits, motoring, agriculture, minerals, natural history, clamming, early history, legends.

41. Eastern U. S. Part 1
RAYMOND S. SPEARS, Little Falls, N. Y. Mississippi, Ohio, Tennessee, Michigan and Hudson valleys; Great Lakes, Adirondacks, Chesapeake Bay; automobile, motorcycle, bicycle and pedestrian touring; shanty-boating; river trapping; outfit suggestions, including those for the transcontinental trails; game, fish and woodcraft; furs, fresh-water pearls, herbs, and their markets.

42. Eastern U. S. Part 2
HAPSBURG LIEBE, Orlando, Fla. Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, N. and S. Carolina, Florida and Georgia except Tennessee River and Atlantic seaboard. Hunting, fishing, camping; logging, lumbering, sawmilling, saws.

43. Eastern U. S. Part 3
DR. G. E. HATHORNE, 70 Main St., Bangor, Me. Maine. Fishing, hunting, canoeing, guides, outfits, supplies.

WEAPONS, PAST and PRESENT

Rifles, shotguns, pistols, revolvers, ammunition and edged weapons. (Any questions on the arms adapted to a particular locality should *not* be sent to this department but to the "Ask Adventure" editor covering the district in question.)

A.—All Shotguns, including foreign and American makes; wing shooting. J. B. THOMPSON, 906 Pontiac Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

B.—All Rifles, Pistols and Revolvers, including foreign and American makes. D. WIGGINS, Salem, Ore.

C.—Edged Weapons, and Firearms Prior to 1800. Swords, pikes, knives, battle-axes, etc., and all firearms of the flintlock, matchlock, wheel-lock and snaphaunce varieties. LEWIS APPLETON BARKER, 40 University Road, Brookline, Mass.

FISHING IN NORTH AMERICA

Salt and Fresh Water Fishing
J. B. THOMPSON, 906 Pontiac Bldg., Chicago, Ill. Covering fishing-tackle and equipment; fly and bait casting and advice; live bait; camping outfits; fishing trips.

MOUNTAINS and MOUNTAINEERING

Especially of New England. Arthur Bent, Appalachian Mountain Club, 1050 Tremont Bldg., Boston, Mass.

★ (*Enclose addressed envelop with 5 cents in stamps NOT attached*)
✠ (*Enclose addressed envelop with 3 cents in stamps NOT attached*)

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STANDING INFORMATION

For information on trade in any part of the world, address J. L. Binda, National Foreign Trade Council, 1 Hanover Sq., New York.

For general information on U. S. and its possessions, write Supt. of Public Documents, Wash., D. C., for catalog of all Government publications.

For the Philippines, Porto Rico, and customs receiverships in Santo Domingo and Haiti, the Bureau of Insular Affairs, War Dept., Wash., D. C.

For Alaska, the Alaska Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, Central Bldg., Seattle, Wash.

For Hawaii, Hawaii Promotion Committee, Chamber of Commerce, Honolulu, T. H. Also, Dept. of the Interior, Wash., D. C.

For Cuba, Bureau of Information, Dept. of Agri., Com and Labor, Havana, Cuba.

The Pan-American Union may be called upon for general information relating to Latin-American matters or for specific data. Address L. S. Rowe, Dir. Gen., Wash., D. C.

For R. C. M. P., Commissioner Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Ottawa, Can. Only unmarried British subjects, age 18 to 40, above 5 ft. 8 in. and under 175 lbs.

For Canal Zone, the Panama Canal Comm., Wash., D. C.

For U. S., its possessions and most foreign countries, the Dept. of Com., Wash., D. C.

Origin of the H. B. Co.

JUST enough of a scrap of history to send you on the trail for more:

Question:—"1. If you know anything about the Hudson's Bay Company posts will you please tell me when the company was started, by whom, and where do the posts extend (from where to where)?

The following refers to Yukon territory:

2. What kinds of game (big and small) are there in the Yukon territory? And birds too?

3. What equipment, clothing, food, guns should be taken in Winter-time and Summer?

4. Are there large forests there?"—FRANK DINELLO, Buffalo, N. Y.

Answer, by Mr. Carson:—The Hudson's Bay Company, as it is now called, received its charter in 1670 from King Charles II of England and was known as the Governor and Company of Gentleman Adventurers Trading into Hudson's Bay. Prince Rupert was the first governor; and a rather interesting story is told of how, when the king sat buried in thought, deliberating whether to sign the charter or not, Rupert came near the throne and placed a black foxskin under his Majesty's hand. The beauty and feel of the fur turned the scale; and the charter was signed, giving them absolute authority over all the territory drained by the waters flowing into Hudson's Bay. It would pay you to visit the public library and get hold of the story of the founding of this company.

Their posts are to be found all over Canada today, some of them being mere trapper's supply-stations; others, in such cities as Vancouver and Winnipeg, being immense establishments carrying stocks of the highest grades of merchandise, the value of which runs into the millions. Drop a card to the Manager, Hudson's Bay Co., Vancouver, B. C., asking him to send you a calendar.

The big game of the Yukon territory is that of Northern America, moose, caribou, bear, sheep, goat, wolf, lynx being about the list. Feathered game is very plentiful since so many ducks, geese and swans go north for the breeding-season.

Equipment is so largely a matter of personal judgment that I never advise a man what to take. You can get everything you need at your last stop on the edge of civilization; and after you have told your plans to the trader and given him an idea of how much money you have to put into an outfit, he can give you better advice than the man who has no idea of what you are going to do, how long you intend to stay or even where you are going.

Aside from saying that you will strike mighty strenuous weather in Winter and that plenty of footwear is a necessity, it is impossible to give a man many pointers on what to take. Another point is that the man who does not know enough about himself to have an idea of what he needs should not get very far from the base of supplies.

While Yukon is pretty well wooded it is anything but a lumbering country at present or in the future. There is plenty of small timber for building and for fuel, and some of these tracts of scrub stuff are fairly extensive; but you are too far north for luxuriant forest growth.

The 'Glade Country

WINTER is the best time to visit it; but who wants to visit it?

Question:—"Will you please write and tell me about the Everglades, Fla. What kinds of big game are there? Is it inhabited, and by whom? Or is it so that people couldn't live there? What caliber rifle is best to hunt there? Would a .38 cal. bullet kill an alligator at short range? What is the shortest route (if there is one) to the center? Where could one get a topographical map of them?

Are the nights damp and hazy, or dry? When is the rainy season; and are they flat and boggy, or kind of hilly and thus drain off? Is there a lake or anything of particular interest near the center? What is the largest snake to be found there? Is it true that one has to be on the lookout for quicksands?

What would be the best time of year to go into the Everglades for a couple of weeks camping? Are there any chances for prospecting?"— —— ——, Philipsburg, N. J.

"If you publish my letter, please do not put my name in."

Answer, by Mr. Liebe:—The big game of the 'Glade country is bear, deer, panther, wildcat. The 'Glades are not inhabited except perhaps by straggling white people and Seminole Indians. One can live there, but it would be extremely unhandy if he stayed long, on account of its being so far from things.

As for a rifle for big game, I would use a .30-30 highpower, but almost any other good rifle ought to be all right. A .38 caliber rifle will kill a 'gator at pretty good range and so will a .22, if it has enough powder and hits a vital spot.

The shortest route to the center of the 'Glade country is probably from Miami *via* canal and Lake Okeechobee. I can not tell you where to get a

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topographical map, and would likely be incorrect if you had one.

Some nights are damp in the 'Glades, some are dry, others hazy—all depending on the weather. I haven't yet found any hard-and-fast rainy season, but it is apt to rain more in the Summer—thunder-showers in the afternoons, which break up hot days and are a blessing.

The 'Glade country is flat, marshy in places, with pine "islands;" that is, higher spots. There are lakes, runs, sawgrass and cypress swamps. Diamond-back rattlers are sometimes found in the drier places, and cottonmouth moccasins in the wet places. Mosquitoes abound.

Okeechobee is near the center of the 'Glade country. The largest snake found there is probably either rattler, cottonmouth, or pine or bull snake.

Yes, one should watch for boggy, miry places, floating "islands," etc. The best time to go in there is in the Winter. No chances for prospecting that I know of. Get wise to snake-bite cures and be prepared if you go. Names are not used in this department of the magazine if it is desired that they be kept out.

The Trail to Tiburon

IT TAKES a desert rat to follow it:

Question:—"I would like to know something about mining conditions in Lower California and the best way to travel and also the direct location of the Tiburon Islands from Mazatlan. Any other information you can give me regarding that part of the country will be greatly appreciated."—WM. M. FITZGERALD, Burke, Idaho.

Answer, by Mr. Mahaffey:—In Lower California there are a number of developed mines but only a few are operating now, the principal mine being that of the Boleo, a French concern, at Santa Rosalia, across the gulf from Guaymas. This company owns their own ships and has a fair-sized smelter at Santa Rosalia. There are numerous surface showings of veins of different minerals and two large deposits of iron ore.

There is no doubt that there are good deposits; but in my opinion on account of the difficulties of transportation and in securing materials and laborers Lower California is at present a "rich man's country" for mining. On account of the higher wages paid on the U. S. side of the line it is hard to secure miners for working, and good roads or even trails are lacking.

There are numerous placers of gold, but in the early 80's there was quite a boom in the mining industry and the best of these have all been worked over. As most of the country is desert or semi-desert water is scarce, although there are many places where colors can be found any place you can get water, but the question is in getting water. Dry washers have been tried out but do not seem to work well as it has not been carried on.

You can get a good map of Lower California from Mr. David Goldbaum, Ensenada, Lower California, showing the known deposits of minerals, etc. I think they cost two dollars each. Good maps are hard to get hold of as this is a practically unmapped country.

You can outfit at Calexico or San Diego, and strike into the country from Mexicali or Tia Juana, preferably Mexicali. The best way to travel is to get three or four burros and pack your junk on them. If you have sawbuck pack-saddles you can take kerosene cases, make handles of rope in each end and save the trouble of tying on your packs and also can lead one burro with ten or twenty gallons of water as there are stretches of two days' travel without water in the dry season.

If you will send to the Department of Commerce, Washington, asking for "Supplements to Consular Reports" covering Lower California you can get detailed information as to conditions. The best book on Lower California is called the "Mother of California" and tells us the early history and so forth. It is published by some firm in San Francisco. You can get it through your bookseller or stationery store.

Tiburon Island is north of Guaymas, on the Sonora side of the Gulf of California.

It is the largest island in the Gulf of California, is about twenty-nine miles long, nearly north and south, with an average width of fifteen miles. It is high and rugged, with peaks from 1,000 to nearly 4,000 feet high. A narrow, intricate channel called El Infiernillo separates it from the mainland to the eastward.

During the greater part of the year Tiburon Island is the resort of the Seri tribe of Indians, who inhabit the adjacent mainland, and were formerly reputed to be hostile. The northwest point of the island is a rocky bluff, surmounted by a steep hill 1,123 feet high, off which at a short distance lie some detached rocks; five and three-quarter miles to the eastward is a high bluff point, the northern extremity of the island.

You can best reach the island from Guaymas, and there you can hire a gas launch to take you there. The island is shown on Hydrographic Chart No. 620, secured from the U. S. Hydrographic Office, Washington, D. C., for fifty cents.

There have been many wild rumors as to rich gold deposits on this island, but candidly I think it is ninety-nine per cent. hot air, for if there were such deposits they would have been developed long ago, Indians or no Indians.

Water is scarce on the island, and if you intend to go there would advise you to take a small still to make fresh water from sea-water. The Indians know of the springs, and although they might not be openly hostile, still they could make a lot of petty bother for you if they didn't like your style. Most fellows get in bad by tampering with the young ladies, so it pays to mind your step.

Gold-Prospecting in Africa

NOTHING doing for the little fellow:

Question:—"Will you be so kind as to give me some insight into the gold-prospecting situation in Africa? I will be perfectly frank and say that I am a greenhorn at mining, but I think that the out-of-door life will do me good if it is sufficiently remunerative to make it really worth while. I have at my disposal only a few hundred dollars and had figured on working my way down there and have my old army equipment which I could use. The questions which I would like to ask are:

1. Is there a reasonable chance of locating claim quickly?

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2. In your estimation is the field really worth while down there?

3. Do you think that quicker results may be obtained in the Klondike fields of Alaska?

Please do not publish this letter under my name."— ——, Westmount, Que., Can.

Answer, by Mr. Miller:—I am afraid your idea of prospecting gold in Africa is quite impossible. In the first place you would want a few thousands of dollars instead of a few hundreds. Then, too, the individual prospector stands no chance whatever against the overcapitalized corporations—the concessioners, who acquire their rights from the local chiefs. At that West African gold-mines have not paid a dividend in ten years. The South African mines are the big yielders, but a tenderfoot and small capitalist could not edge in there.

Mr. Solomons, who handles Alaska for "Ask Adventure," and with whom I am this week staying, says your prospects there in the gold lure would be very small. As a matter of fact many a man that hits the mines with the idea of prospecting soon finds himself glad to get steady employment in store, ranch, etc.

If it is outdoor life you are primarily seeking, that is comparatively easy, or it is from British Columbia down to California.

The work might come a little hard at first, if you are unaccustomed to labor, but one shakes down in a week, and finds oneself eating and sleeping and enjoying an animal health beyond his dreams.

Treating a Rope for Cow-Punching Use

IT HAS to be pliant, but tough and waterproof:

Question:—"Will you be good enough to tell me what sort of rope the cow-punchers in your section use for roping or lassoing cattle? If it is possible to buy a rope all ready made? Will you kindly give me the address of one of the stores that carry them in stock? Could you also tell me the cost?"—CHARLES M. MILLER, Baltimore, Md.

Answer, by Mr. Whiteaker:—It is a matter of individual taste, the kind of ropes the cow-punchers use. Some prefer the hair ropes, others the rawhide, while some use the manila rope altogether. There are ropes made at the factory for the cattle business: but they usually have to be taken through a process of being made pliant, so it would be cheaper and just as good to get a rope and make it right yourself in the first place.

Get a good manila rope about three-eighth inch and from forty to fifty feet long. Stretch the rope between two trees or posts as tight as you can after soaking it thoroughly in warm water. Let it dry while stretched and then go over it with a coat of linseed, lubricating, or some other kind of good oil, and work it well in. After the oil dries give it another coat so that all of the strands are well oiled, and in the mean time keep working and stretching the rope so as to take out all of the give.

Your rope is now pliant, tough and about waterproof.

Unravel about three or four inches at one end and make a loop of about two inches by pleiting the strands unraveled into the rope. Over the loop and the plaited portion sew a piece of leather to protect the rope and cause the loop to hold its shape. You will find that your rope is longer and somewhat smaller, which is the customary size used.

Sugar, Cocoa and Coconut Planting in W. I.

RAISING tropical crops is a job that requires other qualifications than a trustful nature:

Question:—"Can you give me any information as to the requirements to become an overseer or foreman on a sugar or cocoa plantation in any of the West Indies—Cuba or Puerto Rico preferred? Must one speak Spanish fluently? What would salary be? Is there any chance for hunting in Cuba? What would be the more pleasant—sugar or coconuts? I will be discharged from the Marines soon and would like to stay in the tropics. Please do not give my name in *Adventure*."— —— ——, Santo Domingo City, Santo Domingo, D. R.

Answer, by Capt. Dingle:—First and foremost, essential in fact, is a knowledge of the job. Spanish will help, if it is fluent enough to make you useful as a go-between, and may get you a job where you can learn the rest; but unless you know something about the job you are doing, how do you think you can boss others? Perhaps you know about sugar or cocoa planting; then you can get a job almost anywhere in Cuba or Porto Rico.

Your wages will be according to your job. A good overseer can earn big money in either cocoa or sugar; a greenhorn earns just what any other greenhorn earns—laborer's pay.

Judging from the last query in your letter, you seem to be confusing coconuts with cocoa. There is no similarity whatever. Cocoa is a pod, gherkin-shaped; coconuts are cannon-balls fired without powder.

There is no possible way to tell which industry may be the pleasanter for any one man. Cocoa and sugar are field growths, usually in hot, humid ground; coconuts grow more usually in lighter, breezier places; but as for the knowledge required, both cocoa and sugar call for study, and unless, other than expressed in your letter, you have knowledge of these matters, you can scarcely expect to take a place directing others.

While in San Domingo, why don't you look around you? You'll find all these things growing there, and you might learn a whole lot before taking your discharge.

Send questions direct to expert in charge —NOT to the magazine.

Make Your Questions Specific

THIS inquirer is in luck. He shot a general question into the blue void and bagged a wonderful tally of information. But it doesn't happen often, for "Ask Adventure" men are accustomed to turn down cold such inquirers as merely copy off the subjects which the experts give as their specialties, and then genially demand "any information" about them:

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Question:—"I am much interested in the coast States—Washington, Oregon and California.

Could you give me any information about mines, minerals, lumbering; game, fur, camping and fishing?"—ROBERT DEAN, Mitchell, S. D.

Answer, by Mr. Harriman:—Coast States—mining. Washington produces about fifteen to twenty million dollars' worth of minerals a year. But little of this is metallic, such as gold, silver, lead, copper, iron, etc. It is mostly coal, clay, stone, etc.

Oregon produces approximately half as much, of the same types.

California produces enormously of petroleum and liberally in metallic and other minerals. The State production of all minerals totaled in 1918 $199,753,837. In 1919 it dropped to $196,473,560. Of this total, gold had $16,500,000 in 1918 and $17,500,000 in 1919, approximately. The list has fifty-eight items in it—fifty-eight kinds of mineral produced in California.

There are many oil-fields in the State, and all but eight counties are credited with some share in the gold. Various kinds of rock are in the list—feldspar, marble, pumice, limestone, fluorspar, dolomite, granite, etc.

Of metallic minerals California produces gold, silver, lead, zinc, copper, quicksilver, tungsten, molybdenum, magnesium and iron. Some platinum and also a little nickel. Almost all the platinum is from gold dredging.

Regarding lumbering. All three coast States carry it on extensively, as all have enormous forest areas. The finest spar timber in the world is found in the north country. California has almost exclusive control of the redwood timber, only a little being found in Oregon and none elsewhere. Oregon pine, or, more correctly, Douglas fir, is common to all three and is of inestimable value. Seattle and Bellingham have sawed the longest clear timbers known, timbers for the Panama Canal dredgers' spars—from 90 to 103 feet in length, 20 inches thick and 40 inches wide, without a knot, shake or defect of any kind, a world record.

The mountain regions of all three States have many deer, bear, grouse, cougar, bobcats, fishers, martens, mink, coons, foxes, coyotes, wolves, wolverene, quail, squirrels. Fur is so low-priced now that the trappers have nearly all quit and taken other jobs. The game is all protected and may only be shot in short open seasons, with small limits.

The entire Sierra Nevada range, running more than a thousand miles, is great for trout-fishing. There are eight different kinds of trout in the coast streams. Salmon run up every river that reaches the ocean with a large enough volume of water for them. The mountain lakes are full of fish.

There are a million beautiful places for camping, where the trees are fine, the water the best in the world, fish gamy and the air mild. Every National Forest invites the public to come and camp in it. There are eighteen in California, fifteen in Oregon and ten in Washington, covering millions of acres of mountains. All the Forest Service asks is that campers be careful of fires. Everything is free to the camper, if he obeys the rules.

Washington and Oregon and the northern part of this State are the best hunting-ground. Southern California offers no free hunting except in her mountains, and these have only a fraction as much game as in the north.

Another Inca-Gold Story

THEY say it's somewhere in the South Sea Islands; but "they" haven't produced anything yet to prove it, except conversation:

Question:—"Could you give me any information on lost treasure in Tahiti and information on pearl-diving, the climate, and opportunity for adventure?"—JOS. M. KOCKA, Clairton, Pa.

Answer, by Mr. Charles Brown, Jr.:—When I was in Tahiti I did not hear of any lost treasure in that part of French Oceania; but there was considerable talk of gold and precious stones lying somewhere out in the Paumotu Islands. Some of the islanders will tell you that there is good reason to think so, as the old priests of Peru, so the talk goes, stripped the churches and their altars and then put to sea, just escaping those who had caused their downfall. For years and years men have been searching the Paumotu Islands, but to date not a speck of the treasure has been found.

Tahiti is ideally tropical. There are two seasons only, Spring and Summer, with the temperature ranging between 70 and 86 degrees.

Read "Tahiti Days," by Hector MacQuarrie, and "Mystic Isles of the South Seas," by Frederick O'Brien.

"Ask Adventure" service costs you nothing but reply postage and self-addressed envelop.

An Iroquois Library

HERE'S a good start for a reading course on what is perhaps the most important example of confederated government among the North American Indians. Many of us who read A. D. H. Smith's serial, "The Doom Trail," which appeared in the five issues of *Adventure* beginning with the First-August, 1921, will be especially interested:

Question:—"I am not certain that you are the person to whom I should address these queries or no. However, here they are.

What publication would best enable me to study the Iroquois Indians?

Have you any information concerning them?"—B. C. BLACK, St. Petersburg, Fla.

Answer, by Mr. Spears:—Schoolcraft's books about the Indians, giving many details about Iroquois—five volumes—are authoritative. "Myths of the Iroquois," Halsey's book about the Mohawk Valley; Smithsonian Institution reports (write Indian Bureau, Washington, D. C., for information), also Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C. "Documentary History of New York" (through second-hand book stores), contains mass of information, commercial, treaties, etc. Stone's "Joseph Brant," book, full of information.

Get *New York Times Review of Books*, write to second-hand book-dealers advertising in this weekly, and ask them for price-lists of New York Indian Americana. There are several hundred magazine articles on the same subject, and the works divide

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themselves into commercial—fur-trade lands, tribal relations, history, traditions and myths, treaties, etc. You'd better read Francis Parkman's volumes relating to Iroquois—these contain the best general account of the Iroquois and Algonkin Indian relations, wars, French and English treaties, etc.

Put at least five cents postage on all letters addressed to "Ask Adventure" editors who live outside the U. S. Always enclose at least five cents in International Reply Coupons for answer.

Trapping in Quebec Province

RICH as this district is in fur-bearers, it possesses other natural resources that are even richer:

Question:—"1. Will you please tell me if trapping is any good up north of St. Lawrence River in Quebec, and along the small rivers that run into it?

2. Is there any land up these rivers that's good for farming, and could a man homestead it? Or buy it cheap?

3. Is fur-farming permitted in Quebec?"—CHAS. BURGER, Raymond, Wash.

Answer, by Mr. Belford:—The Province of Quebec is one of the best trapping grounds left on the continent. Its enormous extent covers the great fur grounds in the north which supply much of the trade of the Hudson's Bay Co. and of Revillon Frères. Most of the fur-bearing animals are found north of the St. Lawrence River. I would suggest the Lake St. John country, at the head of the Saguenay River (farms can be secured there) or working out from La Tuque on the St. Maurice River. This place is reached by the Transcontinental R. R. from Quebec City; the Lake St. John country by the Canadian National, also from Quebec. But fur is to be found all through the north.

In the Abitibi country on the line of the Transcontinental farther west from La Tuque there is a splendid belt of clay land which will in time become a fine farming country. This land can be homesteaded, or bought at a very low price. It is a timbered country. Produces large amount of pulp woods, which are valuable.

This answers your first two questions. As to the third, I may say that fur-farming is not only permitted, but encouraged. There are fur farms at Piastre Baie, Lorrette, Bourg Royal, St. Catherines, Portneuf County, Gaspé Basin, Percé, Gascapedia and others. Fox, mink, muskrat, lynx, beaver are raised. Permit for the establishment of such a farm must be obtained from the proper authority.

If you write Mr. E. T. D. Chambers, Quebec City, he will send you the official publications on these questions and you will find them very full and explicit.

Quebec is bound to become one of the greatest districts in America. Boundless forests, unlimited water-power, plenty of good land, a great deal of mineral, are attracting capital from Europe and the U. S. A.

The majority of the people are French, but English is spoken and understood practically everywhere. As to the northwestern part of the province, write S. E. Sangster, L. B. 393, Ottawa, Ont.

You can outfit at Montreal, Quebec, Chicoutimi, La Tuque, or almost any frontier town.

LOST TRAILS

NOTE—We offer this department of the "Camp-Fire" free of charge to those of our readers who wish to get in touch again with old friends or acquaintances from whom the years have separated them. For the benefit of the friend you seek, *give your own name if possible.* All inquiries along this line, unless containing contrary instructions, will be considered as intended for publication in full with inquirer's name, in this department, at our discretion. We reserve the right in case inquirer refuses his name, to substitute any numbers or other names, to reject any item that seems to us unsuitable, and to use our discretion in all matters pertaining to this department. Give also your own full address. We will, however, forward mail through this office, assuming no responsibility therefor. We have arranged with the Montreal *Star* to give additional publication in their "Missing Relative Column," weekly and daily editions, to any of our inquiries for persons last heard of in Canada. Except in case of relatives, inquiries from one sex to the other are barred.

MARLIN, MICHAL JEFFERSON. (Jeff.) In or near Augusta, Woodruff Co., Ark., in 1892; also in Clarendon, Monroe Co., Ark., in 1893. Any information as to his whereabouts will be appreciated.—Address L. T. 433, care of *Adventure.*

SPROUT, ROBERT R. Age twenty-two years, brown hair, light eyes, height about four feet ten inches. Last heard of in Hazelton, Pa. about three years ago. Any information will be appreciated by his mother.—Address MRS. EMMA G. HORMAN, 416 Washington St., Reading, Pa.

ANDERSON, OSCAR. Last heard of in Seattle, Washington, March, 1918. Has only one arm—right. Any one knowing his whereabouts please write his mother. —MRS. GILBERT PAULSON, Route 3, Box 39, Alma Center, Jackson Co., Wis.

THAYER, OTIS ELMER. Write your Aunt Sue in Urbana, Ill.

CHAMBEROS, ONESIRNE. Teacher. Last heard of at Lake St. Mary, Township Hincks, Gatineau River, Province of Quebec, forty-five years ago. Any information as to his whereabouts will be appreciated by his sister.—Address MARGARET LORAINE, 809 E. Columbia St., Springfield, Ohio.

DAVIS, MRS. NORA BRAZILLE. Married Frank W. Davis, at that time a widower. He was an actor, playing in New Orleans. Any information will be appreciated. —Address MRS. THERESA NICHOLAS, care of Mrs. Gluckman, 360 South Rampart St., New Orleans, La.

JONES, A. Please write to your pal of that mix-up down South. How about that package? Am on the *Leonidas*, New York City.—Address L. T. 434, care of *Adventure.*

Please notify us at once when you have found your man.

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BENEDICT, OTIS. Write your sister.—MRS. G. PRICE, same address as when you were here last.

BELL, TOM (Red). Write your pal of Deadwood and Belle Fourche, 1910.—Address G. PRICE, 129 North Race St., Urbana, Ill.

HOWARD, JACK S. Last heard of at Camp Presidio, San Francisco, Cal. Write your mother—Address MRS. D. HOWARD, 509 S. 4th St., Champaign, Ill.

CRAFT, MRS. HARRIETT. Foster Mother. Last heard from at Bartlesville, Okla. May be living in Kansas or Missouri. Any information as to her whereabouts will be appreciated.—Address HENRY MEZA, Co. C., 29th Inf., Camp Benning, Ga.

DUVA, SVEN. Letter at General Delivery, San Francisco for you. Am leaving for Porcupine River, Yukon. Will be back in October.—DICK.

CROAD, JAMES. Father. Last heard of selling oil-stock in Denver, Colorado, in 1918. Age fifty-five years, height five feet eleven inches, weight 190 pounds, brown hair and eyes, wears glasses, scar under chin. Any information will be appreciated.—Address JOHN G. CROAD, 3516 Emerson St., Oakland, Cal.

WOULD like to hear from former member of Batt. B. 149th F. A. Rainbow Div. who was present at the time my friend, Stuart R. Murray, was killed on November 9th, 1918, and who also was a close acquaintance of his.—Address SGT. ARTHUR H. RACK, Hdqrs. Co. C., Fort Logan, Colo.

NELSON, MILTON. Please write and let me know where you are. I am still in Seattle and have made good. Was in Alaska.—Address C. B. BAKER, 5826—18th South Ave., Seattle, Wash.

LANDERS, MORRIS. Age about thirty-five or forty, dark hair; about six feet tall. Worked in Superior Ship Building yards in Wisconsin. Left Two Harbors, Minn., May 1, 1916. Last heard of was in Marine Hospital, Chicago, Ill., about June, 1916. Any information will be appreciated.—Address ALEX DONALD, care of *Adventure*.

NIMAN, SAMUEL. Last heard of in Philadelphia Was on oiler on one of the Munson Liners about May, 1920. Any information as to his whereabouts will be appreciated.—Address MORRIS NIMAN, 1903 Biddle St., St. Louis, Mo.

STUART, ARTHUR P. Left Toronto, Canada, March, 1919. Please write. ERLE W. DAVIS, 44 George St., Medford, Mass.

LEE, JOHN (JACK). Last heard from at New Brunswick, N. J. Write to your old pal.—Address CARROLL CROCKETT, 409 Kensington Place, Pasadena, Cal.

CLARK, W. E. (BILL) Enlisted at Fort McDowell, California. Any information as to his whereabouts will be appreciated by his sister.—Address THELMA CLARK, care of I. O. O. F. Home, Corsicana, Texas.

BOB. Where are you? I am still in Houston.—JEFF.

THE following have been inquired for in either the November 30th issue or the December 10th issue of Adventure. They can get the names of the inquirers from this magazine:

BONNIE, L. F.; Burke, James; Cassidy, John Thomas; Crane, E.; De Loy, Edward L.; Echols, Ray; Entwissle, Martha; Gould, Jay K.; Graham, Mrs. Mary; Hansl, Proctor, Jr.; Happy Jack; Harsell, B. L.; Hazzard, Herbert; Hindes, George; Hopper, Cal. B.; Hubbs, James; Hundley, R. L.; McGuire, Charles; O'Dyer, Pat; Sargent, Mabel; Shamblin, Shortiss, James; Smith or Miller, Eddie E.; Stone, Ted; Vaughn, Ernestine; Webber, William; Wigley, August.

MISCELLANEOUS—Boys that served in France, Co. B & C. 8th Field Signal Batt.; J. G. W.; Murriel; Number One R 724,942; Potter, A. and any one who served in the 7th U. S. Cavalry from 1872 until 1881; Relatives of Charles Merinar.

A LIST of unclaimed manuscripts will be published in the January 10th and July 10th issues of Adventure, and a list of unclaimed mail will be published in the last issue of each month.

THE TRAIL AHEAD

DECEMBER 30TH ISSUE

Besides the two complete novelettes mentioned on the second page of this issue the next *Adventure* will bring you the following stories:

SIX FOR FIVE — ***Kenneth Gilbert***
Gob and "*Jimmy Legs*" match wits.

IN KAFFIR KRAALS—IV. An Off-the-Trail Article* — ***Santie Sabalala***
Upina brings home his first wife. *(*See foot-note on first page.*)*

THE GUNMAN — ***George Pearson***
He has a good cry.

VENGEANCE — ***Thomson Burtis***
Swift as the airplane itself.

FOOL'S LUCK — ***Frederick Moore***
Crocodile-hunting in the Sulu Archipelago.

LOST DIGGINGS A Five-Part Story Part IV — ***Hugh Pendexter***
Justice goes gold-hunting.

OFF SAWTOOTH SHOALS — ***R. de S. Horn***
Rum-smugglers and uncertain seas.

NOT OF THEIR BLOOD — ***E. E. Harriman***
Though closer to them than a brother.

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Of Course, You Can Accept!

By the aid of the Deltor you can keep your wardrobe supplied with the smartest of new wear things—clothes for any and every occasion.

The DELTOR

(Now with every new Butterick Pattern)

enables you to save from 50c to $10 on every frock you make; shows you just how to put your garment together—speedily, surely, satisfactorily. Saves you hours of time and does away with all worry.

And enables you to embody in the clothes of your own making the swing, the charm, the perfect fit, the fascinatingly "Frenchy" finish that you've hitherto associated with the creations of the expert modiste.

BUTTERICK

Style Leaders of the World

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New Discovery Takes Off Flesh Almost "While You Wait!"

A pound a day the very first week without medicine, special foods, starving or exercise. Results in 48 hours!

AT last a simple secret has been discovered by a great food specialist which enables you to eat a pound a day off your weight with perfect ease. In fact people who have done say they enjoyed their meals as never before.

Thousands of men and women who have tried strenuous diets, medicine and violent exercising without results, have found this new scientific way a revelation. A pound or more a day from the very start is not too much to expect, and with each pound you lose you will note a corresponding increase in energy and general health.

Women so stout they could never wear light colors or attractive styles without being conspicuous, marvel at the sudden change that has enabled them to wear the most vividly colored and fluffily-styled clothes. Men who used to puff when they walked the least bit quickly—men who were rapidly becoming inactive and sluggish—unable to enjoy outdoor exercise to pleasure, find their return to youthful energy surprising and delightful.

The shadow of her former self—result of the new discovery!

How the Secret Works

The whole thing about this wonderful new way to reduce, which makes losing flesh easy instead of a task, is a simple system of food combination discovered by Eugene Christian.

Some of us eat food that is almost immediately converted into muscle, nerve and tissue. Others eat food that is converted into useless fat. In this latter case, the muscles, bones and tissue are robbed of just so much nutrition and strength. That is why fat people succumb first in case of illness.

Eugene Christian, the famous Food Specialist, while engaged in one of his extensive food experiments, discovered the perfect cure for the "disease of obesity" as he calls it. He found that merely by following certain little natural laws food is converted into essential tissue and muscle, while only enough fat is stored up to provide the necessary body heat. Elated with his discovery and what it would mean to thousands of men and women, Christian has incorporated all his valuable information in the form of little, easy-to-follow lessons under the name "Weight Control, the Basis of Health," which is offered on free trial.

There are no fads in this course, no starving, no medicines, no exercises—nothing but pure common sense, practical help that will do just what we say—take off flesh almost "While you wait." You eat delicious foods, observing of course the few vital rule. Do practically as you please, give up all exercises and bitter self-denials—just follow the directions outlined in Christian's wonderful course, and watch your superfluous flesh vanish.

Nothing Like It Before

You've never tried anything like this new method of Eugene Christian's before. It is entirely different. Instead of starving you, it shows you how to *eat* off weight, a pound of it a day! No trouble, no painful self-denials. All so simple that you'll be delighted—and amazed.

Here's what following Christian's course in Weight Control will do for you. First it will bring down your weight to normal, to what it should naturally be. Then it will make your flesh firm and solid. It will bring a new glow to your cheeks, a new sparkle to your eyes, a new spring to your step. It will give you charm, grace, attractiveness. And all naturally—mind you! Nothing harmful.

We want you to prove it yourself. We want you to see results, to see your own unnecessary flesh vanish. We want you to see why all starving, medicines, bathing and strenuous exercising are unnecessary—why this new discovery gets right down to the real reason for your stoutness, and removes it by natural methods.

No Money In Advance

Just put your name and address on the coupon. Don't send any money. The coupon alone will bring Eugene Christian's complete course to your door, where $1.97 (plus postage) paid to the postman will make it your property.

As soon as the course arrives, weigh yourself. Then glance through the lessons, carefully, and read the startling revelations regarding weight, food and health. Now put the course to the test. Try the first lesson. Weigh yourself in a day or two again and notice the results. Still you've taken no medicines, put yourself to no hardships, done almost nothing you would not ordinarily have done. It's wonderful—and you'll have to admit it yourself.

Mail the coupon NOW. You be the sole judge. If you do not see a marked improvement in 5 days, return the course to us and your money will be immediately refunded. But mail the coupon this very minute, before you forget. Surely you cannot let so positive an opportunity to reduce to normal weight pass by unheeded.

Remember, no money—just the coupon. As we shall receive an avalanche of orders for this remarkable course, it will be wise to send your order at once. Some will have to be disappointed. Don't wait to lose weight. But mail the coupon or write a letter NOW and profit immediately by Eugene Christian's wonderful discovery.

The course will be sent in a plain container.

If you prefer to write a letter, copy the wording of coupon in a letter or on a postcard. Corrective Eating Society, Inc., Dept. W-12212, 43 West 16th Street, New York.

Corrective Eating Society, Inc.
Dept. W-12212, 43 West 16th Street, New York

You may send me prepaid in plain container Eugene Christian's Course "Weight Control, the Basis of Health," in 12 lessons. I will pay the postman only **$1.97** (plus postage) in full payment on arrival. If I am not satisfied with it I have the privilege of returning the course to you after a 5-day trial. It is, of course, understood that you are to refund my money if I return the course.

Name.....
(Please write plainly)

Street.....

City..... State.....

Price outside United States $2.15 cash with order

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